1578 / 5505(4)

LETTERS

ON

Several Subjects.

By the late

Sir THOMAS FITZOSBORNE, Bart.

Publiſhed from the Copies found among his PAPERS.

——*abſentis pignus Amicitiæ.* MART.

DUBLIN:

Printed for M. OWEN in *Skinner-Row*, and W. BRIEN in *Dame Street* Bookſellers. MDCCXLVIII.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE following letters are only part of a much larger collection. It is not material to inform the reader by what means they fell into the editor's hands: however, in juſtice to himſelf, he thinks it neceſſary to declare, that he violates no private right by making them publick. They were entruſted to him with a full power of diſpoſing of them as he ſhould judge proper: accordingly he has ſent out theſe as an eſſay of the ſentiments of the world: and the reception which they ſhall meet with, will determine the fate of thoſe he has in reſerve.

The Engliſh preſs has hitherto kept pretty free from thoſe impertinencies in the epiſtolary way, which have ſo ridiculouſly loaded that of a neighbouring nation: the publiſher was unwilling therefore to be inſtrumental in adding to the number, unleſs he might be thought to contribute ſomething at the ſame time to the value of our productions of this kind.

The author of theſe letters was deſcended from a very antient and illuſtrious family; the founder of which is ſaid to have been the famous earl Fitzoſborne who attended William the Conqueror when he invaded England. He was honoured by the late king with a conſiderable employment: but he ſoon (for reaſons which the reader will find in the twentieth letter of this collection) gave up all publick buſineſs, and retired into the country, where he continued to the time of his death. He left only one ſon, who ſurvived him but a few months; by which means the family became extinct. The birth of this ſon put an end ſome few years before to the life of his lady, whom the editor has diſtinguiſhed by the name of Cleora.

Theſe letters are thrown together juſt as they occurred, without ſcrupulouſly obſerving to place them in a regular ſucceſſion; tho' there is above twenty years diſtance between the earlieſt and the lateſt of them. In all other reſpects the editor has faithfully diſcharged his truſt, and publiſhed them juſt as they came to his hands; excepting only, that as he could not obtain permiſſion to make uſe of the real names of thoſe perſons to whom they were originally addreſſed, he has inſerted imaginary ones in their ſtead. He thought it better to ſend them into the world with thoſe marks of fiction, than interrupt the ſtyle by leaving blanks, or miſlead the reader by initial letters.

THE

THE

CONTENTS.

LETTER I. TO Philotes, *on his Travels* Page 1

II. *To* Clytander, *on the veneration paid to the antients* 3

III. *To* Hortenſius, *returning him thanks for a preſent of brawn: with an account of the author's manner of celebrating the feaſt* 4

IV. *To* Phydippus, *reflections upon friendſhip* 5

V. *To* Timoclea, *a panegyric upon riddles* 7

VI. *To* Philotes, *written in a fit of the ſpleen* 10

VII. *To* Cleora, *rallying her taſte for myſtical and romance writers* 11

VIII. *To* Philotes, *Againſt cruelty to inſects* 12

IX. *To the ſame, upon his marriage* 15

X. *To* Hortenſius, *reflections upon the paſſion of fame* 16

XI. *To* Euphronius, *obſervations upon ſome Paſſages in Mr. Pope's tranſlation of the Iliad* 18

XII. *To* Cleora 24

XIII. *To* Palemon, *againſt ſuicide* 25

XIV. *To* Clytander, *concerning his intentions to marry.--- The character of Amaſia* 28

XV. *To* Phidippus, *reflections upon the ſentiments of the antients concerning friendſhip* 30

XVI. *To the ſame, upon* grace *in writing* 33

XVII. *To* Palamedes 34

XVIII. *To* Palemon, *the character of Hortenſia* 35

XIX. *To* Hortenſius, *concerning ſelf-reverence* 38

XX. *To* Clytander, *reaſons for the author's retirement: --- a deſcription of the ſituation of his villa* 39

XXI. *To* Hortenſius, *concerning the great variety of characters among mankind. The ſingular character of Stilotes* 41

XXII. *To* Philotes 44

XXIII. *To* Palamedes, *the character of Mezentius* 45

XXIV.

XXIV. *To* Orontes, *concerning the neglect of oratorical numbers. Obſervations upon Dr. Tillotſon's ſtyle. The care of the antient orators with reſpect to numerous compoſition, ſtated and recommended* 46
XXV. *To* Cleora, *Written ſix years after the author's marriage with her; an ode upon their wedding-day* 50
XXVI. *To* Palemon, *reflections upon the various revolutions in the mind of man with reſpect both to his ſpeculative notions, and his plans of happineſs* 53
XXVII. *To* Hortenſius, *reflections upon fame, with reſpect to the ſmall number of thoſe whoſe approbation can be conſidered as conferring it* 54
XXVIII. *To* Euphronius, *upon good ſenſe* 55
XXIX. *To* Phidippus, *the character of Cleanthes* 57
XXX. *To* Orontes, *reflections upon ſeeing Mr. Pope's houſe at Binfield* 58
XXXI. *To* Cleora 60
XXXII. *To* Euphronius, *occaſioned by the ſudden death of a friend* 61
XXXIII. *To* Clytander 62
XXXIV. *To* Philotes, *concerning the difficulties that attend our ſpeculative enquiries. Mr. Boyle's moderation inſtanced and recommended* 63
XXXV. *To* Palemon, *an account of the author's happineſs in his retirement* 66
XXXVI. *To* Euphronius, *reflections upon ſtyle* 67
XXXVII. *To* Orontes, *The character of Timoclea* 69
XXXVIII. *To the ſame, concerning the art of verbal criticiſm: a ſpecimen of it applied to an epigram of Swift* 71
XXXIX. *To* Philotes, *from Tunbridge* 73
XL. *To* Cleora 75
XLI. *To* Orontes, *concerning delicacy in relieving the diſtreſſed* 76
XLII. *To* Euphronius, *on the death and character of the author's father* 77
XLIII. *To* Palamedes, *reflections on the moral character of mankind* 79

LETTERS

ON

SEVERAL SUBJECTS.

LETTER I. *To* PHILOTES.

July 4, 1713.

WHILST you are probably enjoying blue ſkies and cooling grots; I am ſhivering here in the midſt of ſummer. The *molles ſub arbore ſomni*, the *ſpeluncæ vividique lacus* are pleaſures which we in England can ſeldom taſte but in deſcription. For in a climate, where the warmeſt ſeaſon is frequently little better than a milder ſort of winter, the ſun is much too welcome a gueſt to be avoided. If ever we have occaſion to complain of him, it muſt be for his abſence: at leaſt I have ſeldom found his viſits troubleſome. You ſee I am ſtill the ſame cold mortal as when you left me. But whatever warmth I may want in my conſtitution, I want none in my affections; and you have not a friend who is more ardently yours than I pretend to be. You have indeed ſuch a right to my heart from mere gratitude, that I almoſt wiſh I owed leſs upon that account, that I might give it you upon a more diſintereſted principle. However, if there is any part of it which you cannot demand in juſtice, be aſſured you have it by affection; ſo that on one or other of theſe titles you may always depend upon me as wholly yours. Can it be neceſſary after this to add, that I received your letter with ſingular ſatisfaction, as it brought me an account of your wel-

fare, and of the agreeable manner in which you paſs your time? If there be any room to wiſh you an increaſe of pleaſure, it is, perhaps, that the three virgins you mention, were a few degrees handſomer and younger. But I would not deſire their charms ſhould be heightened, were I not ſure they will never leſſen your repoſe; for knowing your Stoiciſm as I do, I dare truſt your eaſe with any thing leſs than a goddeſs: and thoſe females, I perceive, are ſo far removed from the order of divinities, that they ſeem to require a conſiderable advance before I could even allow them to be ſo much as women.

It was mentioned to me the other day, that there is ſome probability we may ſee you in England by the winter. When I conſidered only my private ſatisfaction, I heard this with a very ſenſible pleaſure. But as I have long learnt to ſubmit my own intereſt to yours, I could not but regret there was a likelihood of your being ſo ſoon called off, from one of the moſt advantageous opportunities of improvement that can attend a ſenſible mind. An ingenious Italian author of your acquaintance, compares a judicious traveller to a river that encreaſes its ſtream the farther it flows from its ſource, or to certain ſprings which running through rich veins of mineral, improve their qualities as they paſs along. It were pity then, you ſhould be checked in ſo uſeful a progreſs, and diverted from a courſe, from whence you may derive ſo many noble advantages. You have hitherto, I imagine, been able to do little more than lay in materials for your main deſign. But ſix months now, would give you a truer notion of what is worthy of obſervation in the countries through which you paſs, than twice that time when you were leſs acquainted with the languages. The truth is, till a man is capable of converſing with eaſe among the natives of any country, he can never be able to form a juſt and adequate idea of their policy and manners. He who ſits at a play without underſtanding the dialect, may indeed diſcover which of the actors are beſt dreſſed, and how well the ſcenes are painted or diſpoſed; but the characters and conduct

of

of the drama muſt for ever remain a ſecret to him. Adieu, I am, &c.

LETTER II. *To* Clytander.

IF I had been a party in the converſation you mention, I ſhould have joined, I believe, with your friend in ſupporting thoſe ſentiments you ſeem to condemn. I will venture indeed to acknowledge that I have long been of opinion, the moderns pay too blind a deference to the ancients; and though I have the higheſt veneration for ſeveral of their remains, yet I am inclined to think they have occaſioned us the loſs of ſome excellent originals. They are the proper and beſt guides, I allow, to thoſe who have not the force to break out into new paths. But whilſt it is thought ſufficient praiſe to be their followers, genius is checked in her flights, and many a fair tract lies undiſcovered in the boundleſs regions of imagination. Thus, had Virgil truſted more to his native ſtrength, the Romans, perhaps, might have ſeen an original Epic in their language. But Homer was conſidered by that admired poet as the ſacred object of his firſt and principle attention; and he ſeemed to think it as the nobleſt triumph of genius, to be adorned with the ſpoils of that glorious chief.

You will tell me, perhaps, that even Homer himſelf was indebted to the ancients; that the full ſtreams he diſpenſed, did not flow from his own ſource, but were derived to him from an higher. This, I acknowledge, has been aſſerted; but aſſerted without proof, and, I may venture to add, without probability. He ſeems to have ſtood alone and unſupported; and to have ſtood, for that very reaſon, ſo much the nobler object of admiration. Scarce indeed, I imagine, would his works have received that high regard which was paid to them from their earlieſt appearance, had they been formed upon prior models, had they ſhone only with reflected light.

But will not this ſervile humour of ſubjecting the powers of invention to the guidance of the ancients,

account, in ſome degree at leaſt, for our meeting with ſo ſmall a number of authors who can claim the merit of being originals? Is not this a kind of ſubmiſſion, that damps the fire and weakens the vigour of the mind? For the ancients ſeem to be conſidered by us as ſo many guards to prevent the free excurſions of imagination, and ſet bounds to her flight. Whereas they ought rather to be looked upon (the few, I mean, who are themſelves originals) as encouragements to a full and uncontrouled exertion of her faculties. But if here and there a poet has courage enough to truſt to his own unaſſiſted reach of thought; his example does not ſeem ſo much to incite others to make the ſame adventurous attempts, as to confirm them in the humble diſpoſition of imitation. For if he ſucceeds, he immediately becomes himſelf the occaſion of a thouſand models; if he does not, he is pointed out as a diſcouraging inſtance of the folly of renouncing thoſe eſtabliſhed leaders which antiquity has authorized. Thus invention is depreſſed, and genius enſlaved: The creative power of poetry is loſt, and the ingenious, inſtead of exerting that productive faculty which alone can render them the juſt objects of admiration, are humbly contented with borrowing both the materials and the plans of their mimick ſtructures. I am, &c.

LETTER III. *To* Hortenſius.

YOUR excellent brawn wanted no additional recommendation to make it more acceptable, but that of your company. However, though I cannot ſhare it with my friend, I devote it to his memory, and make daily offerings of it to a certain divinity, whoſe temples, though now well-nigh deſerted, were once held in the higheſt veneration: ſhe is mentioned by ancient authors under the name and title of DIVA AMICITIA. To her I bring the victim you have furniſhed me with, in all the pomp of Roman rites. Wreathed with the ſacred *vitta*, and crowned with a branch of roſemary, I place it on an altar of well poliſhed

poliſhed mahogony, where I pour libations over it of acid wine, and ſprinkle it with flower of muſtard. I deal out certain portions to thoſe who aſſiſt at this ſocial ceremony, reminding them of the important buſineſs upon which they are aſſembled, with an *hoc age*; and conclude the feſtival with this votive couplet:

Cloſe as this brawn the circling fillet binds,
May friendſhip's ſacred bands unite our minds.

Farewel. I am, &c.

LETTER IV. *To* Phidippus.

HARDLY, I imagine, were you in earneſt, when you required my thoughts upon friendſhip: for, to give you the trueſt idea of that generous intercourſe, may I not juſtly refer you back to the ſentiments of your own heart? I am ſure, at leaſt, I have learned to improve my own notions of that refined affection, by thoſe inſtances which I have obſerved in yourſelf; as it is from thence I have received the cleareſt conviction, that it derives all its ſtrength and ſtability from virtue and good ſenſe.

There is not, perhaps, a quality more uncommon in the world, than that which is neceſſary to form a man for this refined commerce: for however ſociableneſs may be eſteemed a juſt characteriſtick of our ſpecies; *friendlineſs*, I am perſuaded, will ſcarce be found to enter into its general definition. The qualifications requiſite to ſupport and conduct friendſhip in all its ſtrength and extent, do not ſeem to be ſufficiently diffuſed among the human race, to render them the diſtinguiſhing marks of mankind; unleſs generoſity and good ſenſe ſhould be allowed (what they never can be allowed) univerſally to prevail. On the contrary, how few are in poſſeſſion of thoſe moſt amiable of endowments? How few are capable of that noble elevation of mind which raiſes a man above thoſe little jealouſies and rivalſhips that ſhoot up in the paths of common amities?

We ſhould not, indeed, ſo often hear complaints of the inconſtancy and falſeneſs of friends, if the world in general were more cautious than they uſually are, in

forming connections of this kind. But the misfortune is, our friendſhips are apt to be too *forward*, and thus either fall off in the bloſſom, or never arrive at juſt maturity. It is an excellent piece of advice therefore, that the poet Martial gives upon this occaſion:

Tu tantum inſpice qui novus *paratur,*
An poſſit fieri vetus *ſodalis.*

Were I to make trial of any perſon's qualifications for an union of ſo much delicacy, there is no part of his conduct I would ſooner ſingle out, than to obſerve him in his reſentments. And this, not upon the maxim frequently advanced, that "the beſt friends make the bitter "tereſt enemies;" but, on the contrary, becauſe I am perſuaded, that he who is capable of being a bitter enemy, can never poſſeſs the neceſſary virtues that conſtitute a true friend. For muſt he not want generoſity (that moſt eſſential principle of an amicable combination) who can be ſo mean as to indulge a ſpirit of *ſettled* revenge, and coolly triumph in the oppreſſion of an adverſary? Accordingly there is no circumſtance in the character of the excellent Agricola, that gives me a higher notion of the true heroiſm of his mind, than what the hiſtorian of his life mentions concerning his conduct in this particular inſtance. *Ex Iracundia* (ſays Tacitus) *nihil ſupererat: ſecretum & ſilentium ejus non timeres.* His elevated ſpirit was too great to ſuffer his reſentment to ſurvive the occaſion of it; and thoſe who provoked his indignation had nothing to apprehend from the *ſecret* and ſilent workings of unextinguiſhed malice. But the practice, it muſt be owned (perhaps I might have ſaid, the principle too) of the world runs ſtrongly on the ſide of the contrary diſpoſition; and thus, in oppoſition to that generous ſentiment of your admired orator, which I have ſo often heard you quote with applauſe, our friendſhips are mortal, whilſt it is our enmities only that never die.

But though judgment muſt collect the materials of this goodly ſtructure, it is affection that gives the cement; and paſſion as well as reaſon ſhould concur in forming a firm and laſting coalition. Hence, perhaps, it is that not only the moſt powerful but the moſt laſting

ing friendſhips, are uſually the produce of the early ſeaſon of our lives, when we are moſt ſuſceptible of the warm and affectionate impreſſions. The connections into which we enter in any after-period, decreaſe in ſtrength as our paſſions abate in heat; and there is not, I believe, a ſingle inſtance of a vigorous friendſhip that ever ſtruck root in a boſom chilled by years. How irretrievable then is the loſs of thoſe beſt and faireſt acquiſitions of our youth! Seneca taking notice of Auguſtus Cæſar's lamenting, upon a certain occaſion, the death of Mæcenas and Agrippa, obſerves, that he who could inſtantly repair the deſtruction of whole fleets and armies, and bid Rome, after a general conflagration, riſe out of her aſhes even with more luſtre than before; was yet unable, during a whole life, to fill up thoſe laſting vacancies in his friendſhip. A reflection which reminds me of renewing my ſolicitations, that you would be more cautious in hazarding a life which I have ſo many reaſons to love and honour. For whenever an accident of the ſame kind ſhall ſeparate (and what other accident can ſeparate) the happy union which has ſo long ſubſiſted between us; where ſhall I retrieve ſo ſevere a loſs? I am utterly indiſpoſed to enter into new habitudes and extend the little circle of my friendſhips: happy if I may but preſerve it firm and unbroken to the cloſing moment of my life! Adieu. I am, &c.

LETTER V. *To* Timoclea.

July 29, 1729.

IT is with wonderful ſatisfaction I find you are grown ſuch an adept in the occult arts, and that you take a laudable pleaſure in the ancient and ingenious ſtudy of making and ſolving riddles. It is a ſcience, undoubtedly, of moſt neceſſary acquirement, and deſerves to make a part in the education of both ſexes. Thoſe of yours may by this means very innocently indulge their uſual curioſity of diſcovering and diſcloſing a ſecret; whilſt ſuch amongſt ours who have a turn for deep ſpeculations, and are fond of puzzling themſelves and

others, may exerciſe their faculties this way with much private ſatisfaction, and without the leaſt diſturbance to the publick. It is an art indeed which I would recommend to the encouragement of both the univerſities, as it affords the eaſieſt and ſhorteſt method of conveying ſome of the moſt uſeful principles of logic, and might therefore be introduced as a very proper ſubſtitute in the room of thoſe dry ſyſtems which are at preſent in vogue in thoſe places of education. For as it conſiſts in diſcovering truth under borrowed appearances, it might prove of wonderful advantage in every branch of learning, by habituating the mind to ſeparate all foreign ideas, and conſequently preſerving it from that grand ſource of error, the being deceived by falſe connections. In ſhort, Timoclea, this your favourite ſcience contains the ſum of all human policy; and as there is no paſſing through the world without ſometimes mixing with fools and knaves, who would not chooſe to be maſter of the enigmatical art, in order, on proper occaſions, to be able to lead aſide craft and impertinence from their aim, by the convenient artifice of a prudent diſguiſe? It was the maxim of a very wiſe prince, that "he who knows not how to diſſemble, knows not how to reign:" and I deſire you would receive it as mine, that "he who knows not how to riddle, knows not how to live."

But beſides the general uſefulneſs of this art, it will have a farther recommendation to all true admirers of antiquity, as being practiſed by the moſt conſiderable perſonages of early times. It is almoſt three thouſand years ago ſince Samſon propoſed his famous riddle ſo well known; though the advocates for ancient learning muſt forgive me, if in this article I attribute the ſuperiority to the moderns: for if we may judge of the ſkill of the former in this profound art by that remarkable ſpecimen of it, the geniuſes of thoſe early ages were by no means equal to thoſe which our times have produced. But as a friend of mine has lately finiſhed, and intends very ſhortly to publiſh, a moſt curious work in folio, wherein he has fully proved that important point, I will not anticipate the pleaſure you will receive by peruſing his ingenious

ingenious performance. In the mean while let it be remembered to the immortal glory of this art, that the wiſeſt man, as well as the greateſt prince that ever lived, is ſaid to have amuſed himſelf and a neighbouring monarch in trying the ſtrength of each others talents in this way; ſeveral riddles, it ſeems, having paſſed between Solomon and Hiram, upon condition that he who failed in the ſolution ſhould incur a certain penalty. It is recorded likewiſe of the great father of poetry, even the divine Homer himſelf, that he had a taſte of this ſort; and we are told by a Greek writer of his life, that he died with vexation for not being able to diſcover a riddle which was propoſed to him by ſome fiſhermen at a certain iſland called Iö.

I am inclined to think, indeed, that the ancients in general were ſuch admirers of this art, as to inſcribe riddles upon their tomb ſtones, and that not ſatisfied with puzzling the world in their life-time, they bequeathed enigmatical legacies to the publick after their deceaſe. My conjecture is founded upon an ancient inſcription, which I will venture to quote to you, though it is in Latin, as your friend and neighbour the antiquarian will, I am perſuaded, be very glad of obliging you with a diſſertation upon it. Be pleaſed then to aſk him, whether he does not think that the following inſcription favours my ſentiments:

VIATORES. OPTVMI.
HIS. NVGIS. GRYPHIS. AMBAGIBVSQVE. MEIS.
CONDONARE. POSCIMVS.

However this may be, it is certain that it was one of the great entertainments of the paſtoral Life, and therefore, if for no other reaſon, highly deſerving the attention of our modern Arcadians. You remember, I dare ſay, the riddle which the ſhepherd Dametas propoſes to Mænalcas in Dryden's Virgil:

Say where the round of Heaven, which all contains,
To three ſhort ells on earth our ſight reſtrains,
Tell That, and riſe a Phœbus for thy pains.

This ænigma, which has exerciſed the gueſſes of many a learned critic, remains yet unexplained: which I mention not only as an inſtance of the wonderful pene-

tration which is neceſſary to render a man a complete adept in this moſt noble ſcience, but as an incitement to you to employ your ſkill in attempting the ſolution.—And now, Timoclea, what will your grave friend ſay, who reproached you, it ſeems, for your riddling genius, when he ſhall find you are thus able to defend your favourite ſtudy by the lofty examples of kings, commentators, and poets? I am, &c.

LETTER VI. *To* Philotes.

Nov. 12, 1714.

AMONG all the advantages which attend friendſhip, there is not one more valuable than the liberty it admits in laying open the various affections of ones mind, without reſerve or diſguiſe. There is ſomething in diſcloſing to a friend the occaſional emotions of ones heart, that wonderfully contributes to ſooth and allay its perturbations, in all its moſt penſive or anxious moments. Nature, indeed, ſeems to have *caſt* us with a general diſpoſition to communication: though at the ſame time it muſt be acknowledged, there are few to whom one may ſafely be communicative. Have I not reaſon then, to eſteem it as one of the moſt deſirable circumſtances of my life, that I dare, without ſcruple or danger, *think aloud* to Philotes? It is meerly to exerciſe that happy privilege, I now take up my pen; and you muſt expect nothing in this letter but the picture of my heart in one of its ſplenetic hours. There are certain ſeaſons, perhaps, in every man's life when he is diſſatisfied with himſelf and every thing around him, without being able to give a ſubſtantial reaſon for being ſo. At leaſt I am unwilling to think, that this dark cloud, which at preſent hangs over my mind, is peculiar to my conſtitution, and never gathers in any breaſt but my own. It is much more, however, my concern to diſſipate this vapour in myſelf, than to diſcover that it ſometimes ariſes in others; as there is no diſpoſition a man would rather endeavour to cheriſh, than a conſtant aptitude of being pleaſed. But my practice will not always credit my philoſophy; and I find

ſind it much eaſier to point out my diſtemper, than to remove it. After all, is it not a mortifying conſideration that the powers of reaſon ſhould be leſs prevalent than thoſe of matter; and that a page of Seneca can not raiſe the ſpirits, when a pint of claret will? It might methinks, ſomething abate the inſolence of human pride to conſider, that it is but increaſing or deminiſhing the velocity of certain fluids in the animal machine, to elate the ſoul with the gayeſt hopes, or ſink her into the deepeſt deſpair; to depreſs the hero into a coward, or advance the coward into a hero. It is to ſome ſuch mechanical cauſe I am inclined to attribute the preſent gloomineſs of my mind: at the ſame time I will confeſs, there is ſomething in that very conſideration which gives ſtrength to the fit, and renders it ſo much the more difficult to throw off. For tell me, is it not a diſcouraging reflection to find one's ſelf *ſervile* (as Shakeſpear expreſſes it) *to every ſkiey influence*, and the ſport of every paltry atom? to owe the eaſe of ones mind not only to the diſpoſition of ones own body, but almoſt to that of every other which ſurrounds us? Adieu. I am, &c.

LETTER VII. *To* Cleora.

Aug. 1, 1719.

I THINK, Cleora, you are the trueſt female hermit, I ever knew. At leaſt I do not remember to have met with any among your ſex, of the ſame order with yourſelf; for as to the Religious on the other ſide of the water, I can by no means eſteem them worthy of being ranked in your number. They are a ſort of people who either have ſeen nothing of the world or too much: and where is the merit of giving up what one is not acquainted with, or what one is weary of? But you are a far more illuſtrious recluſe, who have entered into the world with innocency, and retired from it with good humour. That ſort of life, which makes ſo amiable a figure in the deſcription of poets and philoſophers, and which kings and heroes have profeſſed to aſpire after, Cleora actually enjoys; ſhe

lives

lives her own, free from the follies and impertinences the hurry and diſappointments of falſe purſuits of every kind. How much do I prefer one hour of ſuch ſolitude, to all the glittering, glaring, gaudy days of the ambitious? I ſhall not envy them their gold and their ſilver, their precious jewels, and their changes of raiment, while you permit me to join you and *Alexander* in your hermitage. I hope to do ſo on Sunday evening, and attend you to the ſiege of Tyre, or the deſarts of Africa, or wherever elſe your hero ſhall lead you. But ſhould I find you in more elevated company, and engaged in the rapturous **** even then, I hope, you will not refuſe to admit me of your party. If I have not yet a proper *goût* for the myſtic writers, perhaps I am not quite incapable of acquiring one; and as I have every thing of the hermit in my compoſition but the enthuſiaſm, it is not impoſſible but I may catch that alſo, by the aſſiſtance of you and * * * *. I deſire you would receive me as a probationer at leaſt, and as one who is willing, if he is worthy, to be initiated into your ſecret doctrines. I think I only want this taſte and a reliſh of the marvellous, to be wholly in your ſentiments. Poſſibly I may be ſo happy as to attain both in good time: I fancy at leaſt there is a cloſe connection between them, and I ſhall not deſpair of obtaining the one, if I can by any means arrive at the other. But which muſt I endeavour at firſt? ſhall I prepare for the myſtic by commencing with the romance, or would you adviſe me to begin with Malbranche before I undertake Clelia? Suffer me however, ere I enter the regions of fiction, to bear teſtimony to one conſtant truth, by aſſuring you that I am, &c.

LETTER VIII. *To* Philotes.

Aug. 20, 1729.

I FEAR I ſhall looſe all my credit with you as a gardener, by this ſpecimen which I venture to ſend you of the produce of my walls. The ſnails, indeed, have had more than their ſhare of my peaches and nectarines

tarines this ſeaſon: but will you not ſmile when I tell you, that I deem it a ſort of cruelty to ſuffer them to be deſtroyed? I ſhould ſcarce dare to acknowledge this weakneſs (as the generality of the world, no doubt, would call it) had I not experienced, by many agreeable inſtances, that I may ſafely lay open to you every ſentiment of my heart. To confeſs the truth then, I have ſome ſcruples with reſpect to the liberty we aſſume in the *unlimited* deſtruction of thoſe lower orders of exiſtence. I know not upon what principle of reaſon and juſtice it is, that mankind have founded their right over the lives of every creature that is placed in a ſubordinate rank of being to themſelves. Whatever claim they may have in right of food and ſelf-defence, did they extend their privilege no farther than thoſe two articles would reaſonably carry them, numberleſs beings might enjoy their lives in peace, who are now hurried out of them by the moſt wanton and unneceſſary cruelties. I cannot indeed diſcover why it ſhould be thought leſs inhuman to cruſh to death a harmleſs inſect, whoſe ſingle offence is that he eats that food which nature has prepared for him; than it would be were I to kill any more bulky creature for the ſame reaſon. There are few tempers ſo hardened to the impreſſions of humanity, as not to ſhudder at the thought of the latter; and yet the former is univerſally practiſed without the leaſt check of compaſſion. This ſeems to ariſe from the groſs error of ſuppoſing, that every creature is really in itſelf contemptible, which happens to be cloathed with a body infinitely diſproportionate to our own; not conſidering that *great* and *little* are merely relative terms. But the inimitable Shakeſpear would teach us that,

——— *the poor beetle that we tread upon,*
In corporal ſufferance feels a pang as great,
As when a giant dies. —

And this is not thrown out in the latitude of poetical imagination, but ſupported by the diſcoveries of the moſt improved philoſophy: For there is every reaſon to believe that the ſenſations of many inſects are as exquiſite as thoſe of creatures of far more enlarged dimenſions;

menſions; perhaps even more ſo. The Millepedes, for inſtance, rolls itſelf round, upon the ſlighteſt touch, and the ſnail gathers in her horns upon the leaſt approach of your hand. Are not theſe the ſtrongeſt indications of *their* ſenſibility? and is it any evidence of *ours*, that we are not therefore induced to treat them with a more ſympathizing tenderneſs?

I was extremely pleaſed with a ſentiment I met with the other day in honeſt Montagne. That good-natured author remarks, that there is a certain general claim of kindneſs and benevolence which every ſpecies of creatures has a right to from us. It is to be regretted that this generous maxim is not more attended to, in the affair of education, and preſſed home upon tender minds in its full extent and latitude. I am far indeed from thinking, that the early delight which children diſcover in tormenting flies, &c. is a mark of any *innate* cruelty of temper; becauſe this turn may be accounted for upon other principles, and it is entertaining unworthy notions of the Deity to ſuppoſe he forms mankind with a propenſity to the moſt deteſtible of all diſpoſitions. But moſt certainly by being unreſtrained in ſports of this kind, they may acquire by habit, what they never would have learned from nature, and grow up into a confirmed inattention to every kind of ſuffering but their own. Accordingly the ſupreme court of judicature at Athens thought an inſtance of this ſort not below its cognizance, and puniſhed a boy for putting out the eyes of a poor bird, that had unhappily fallen into his hands.

It might be of ſervice therefore, it ſhould ſeem, in order to awaken as early as poſſible in children an extenſive ſenſe of humanity, to give them a view of ſeveral ſorts of inſects as they may be magnified by the aſſiſtance of glaſſes, and to ſhew them that the ſame evident marks of wiſdom and goodneſs prevail in the formation of the minuteſt inſect, as in that of the moſt enormous Leviathan: that they are equally furniſhed with whatever is neceſſary not only to the preſervation, but the happineſs of their beings in that claſs of exiſtence to which providence has aſſigned them: in a word, that

that the whole conſtruction of their reſpective organs diſtinctly proclaims them the objects of the divine benevolence, and therefore that they juſtly ought to be ſo of ours. I am, &c.

LETTER IX. *To the ſame.*

Feb. 1, 1716.

YOU ſee how much I truſt to your good-nature and your judgment, whilſt I am the only perſon, perhaps, among your friends, who have ventured to omit a congratulation in form. I am not, however, intentionally guilty; for I really deſigned you a viſit before now: but hearing that your acquaintance flowed in upon you from all quarters, I thought it would be more agreeable to you, as well as to myſelf, if I waited till the inundation was abated. But if I have not joined in the general voice of congratulation; I have not however omitted the ſincere, though ſilent wiſhes, which the warmeſt friendſhip can ſuggeſt to a heart entirely in your intereſts. Had I not long ſince forſaken the regions of poetry, I would tell you, in the language of that country, how often I have ſaid, may

——— *all heaven,*
And happy conſtellations on that hour
Shed their ſelecteſt influence! MILTON.

But plain proſe will do as well for plain truth; and there is no occaſion for any art to perſuade you, that you have, upon every occurence of your life, my beſt good wiſhes. I hope ſhortly to have an opportunity of making myſelf better known to Aſpaſia. When I am ſo, I ſhall rejoyce with her on the choice ſhe has made of a man, from whom I will undertake to promiſe her all the happineſs which the ſtate ſhe has enter'd into, can afford. Thus much I do not ſcruple to ſay of her huſband to *you*: the reſt I had rather ſay to *her*. If upon any occaſion you ſhould mention me, let it be in the character which I moſt value myſelf upon, that of your much obliged and very affectionate friend,

LET-

LETTER X. *To* Hortenſius.

July 5, 1729.

I CAN by no means ſubſcribe to the ſentiments of your laſt letter, nor agree with you in thinking, that the love of Fame is a paſſion, which either reaſon or religion condemn. I confeſs indeed, there are ſome who have repreſented it as inconſiſtent with both; and I remember in particular, the excellent author of *The religion of nature delineated*, has treated it as highly irrational and abſurd. As the paſſage falls in ſo thoroughly with your own turn of thought, you will have no objection, I imagine, to my quoting it at large; and I give it you, at the ſame time, as a very great authority on your ſide. "In reality (ſays that writer) "the man is not known ever the more to poſterity, "becauſe his name is tranſmitted to them: *He* doth "not live, becauſe his *name* does. When it is ſaid, "Julius Cæſar ſubdued Gaul, conquered Pompey, *&c.* "it is the ſame thing as to ſay, the conqueror of Pom"pey was Julius Cæſar, *i. e.* Cæſar and the conquer"or of Pompey is the ſame thing; Cæſar is as much "known by one deſignation as by the other. The "amount then is only this: that the conqueror of "Pompey conquered Pompey; or ſomebody con"quered Pompey; or rather, ſince Pompey is as lit"tle known now as Cæſar, *ſomebody* conquered *ſome"body*. Such a poor buſineſs is this boaſted immor"tality! and ſuch is the thing called Glory among us! "To diſcerning men this fame is mere air, and what "they deſpiſe, if not ſhun."

But ſurely, *'twere to conſider too curiouſly* (as Horatio ſays to Hamlet) *to conſider thus*. For though fame with poſterity ſhould be, in the ſtrict analyſis of it, no other than what it is here deſcribed, a mere unintereſting propoſition, amounting to nothing more than that *ſomebody* acted meritoriouſly; yet it would not neceſſarily follow, that true philoſophy would baniſh the deſire of it from the human breaſt. For this paſſion may be (as moſt certainly it is) wiſely implanted

implanted in our ſpecies, notwithſtanding the correſponding object ſhould in reality be very different from what it appears in imagination. Do not many of our moſt refined and even contemplative pleaſures owe their exiſtence to our miſtakes? It is but extending (I will not ſay, improving) ſome of our ſenſes to a higher degree of acuteneſs than we now poſſeſs them, to make the faireſt views of nature, or the nobleſt productions of art, appear horrid and deformed. To ſee things as they truly and in themſelves are, would not always, perhaps, be of advantage to us in the intellectual world, any more than in the natural. But after all, who ſhall certainly aſſure us, that the pleaſure of virtuous fame dies with its poſſeſſor, and reaches not to a farther ſcene of exiſtence? There is nothing, it ſhould ſeem, either abſurd or unphiloſophical in ſuppoſing it poſſible at leaſt, that the praiſes of the good and the judicious, *that ſweeteſt muſick to an honeſt ear* in this world, may be echoed back to the manſions of the next; that the poet's deſcription of fame may be literally true, and though ſhe walks upon earth, ſhe may yet lift her head into heaven:

Ingrediturque ſolo et capat inter nubila condit.

But can it be reaſonable to extinguiſh a paſſion which nature has univerſally lighted up in the human breaſt, and which we conſtantly find to burn with moſt ſtrength and brightneſs in the nobleſt and beſt formed boſoms? Accordingly revelation is ſo far from endeavouring (as you ſuppoſe) to eradicate the ſeed which nature has thus deeply planted, that ſhe rather ſeems, on the contrary, to cheriſh and forward its growth. To be *exalted with honour*, and to be had *in everlaſting remembrance*, are in the number of thoſe encouragements which the Jewiſh diſpenſation offered to the virtuous; as the perſon from whom the ſacred author of the Chriſtian ſyſtem received his birth, is herſelf repreſented as rejoicing that *all generations ſhould call her bleſſed.*

To be convinced of the great advantage of cheriſhing this high regard to poſterity, this noble deſire of an after-life in the breath of others, one need only look

look back upon the hiſtory of the ancient Greeks and Romans. What other principle was it, Hortenſius, which produced that exalted ſtrain of virtue in *thoſe* days, that may well ſerve as a model to *theſe?* Was it not the *conſentiens laus bonorum*, the *incorrupta vox bene judicantium*, (as Tully calls it) the concurrent approbation of the *good*, the uncorrupted applauſe of the *wiſe*, that animated their moſt generous purſuits?

To confeſs the truth, I have been ever inclined to think it a very dangerous attempt, to endeavour to leſſen the motives of right acting, or to raiſe any ſuſpicion concerning their ſolidity. The tempers and diſpoſitions of mankind are ſo extremely different, that it ſeems neceſſary they ſhould be called into action by a variety of incitements. Thus while ſome are willing to wed virtue for her perſonal charms, others are engaged to take her for the ſake of her expected dowry: and ſince her followers and admirers have ſo little to hope from her in preſent, it were pity, methinks, to reaſon them out of any imagined advantage in reverſion. Farewel, I am, *&c.*

LETTER XI. *To* Euphronius.

October 10, 1719.

I Have often mentioned to you the pleaſure I received from Mr. Pope's late tranſlation of the Iliad: but my admiration of that inimitable performance has encreaſed upon me, ſince you tempted me to compare the copy with the original. To ſay of this noble work, that it is the beſt which ever appeared of the kind, would be ſpeaking in much lower terms than it deſerves; the world perhaps ſcarce ever before ſaw a truly poetical tranſlation: for, as Denham obſerves,

Such is our pride, our folly, or our fate,
That few, but thoſe who cannot write, tranſlate.

But Mr. Pope ſeems in moſt places to have been inſpired with the ſame ſublime ſpirit that animates his original; as he often takes fire from a ſingle hint in his author, and blazes out even with a ſtronger and bright-

er

er flame of poetry. Thus the character of Therſites, as it ſtands in the Engliſh Iliad, is heighten'd, I think, with more maſterly ſtrokes of ſatyr than appear in the Greek; as many of thoſe ſimilies in Homer, which would appear, perhaps, to a modern eye too naked and unornamented, are painted by Pope in all the beautiful drapery of the moſt graceful metaphor. With what propriety of figure, for inſtance, has he raiſed the following compariſon:

Ευτ' ορεος κορυφησι Νοτος καλυψεν ομιχλην
Ποιμεσιν ουτι φιλην, κλεπτῃ δε τε νυκτος αμεινων,
Τοσσον τις τ'επιλευσσει, οσον τ' επι λααν ικηται·
Ως αρα των υπο ποσσι κονισαλος ωρνυτ' αελλης
Ερχομενων. ——— IL. iii. 10.

Thus from his flaggy wings when Eurus ſheds
A night of vapours round the mountain-heads,
Swift gliding miſts the duſky fields invade;
To thieves more grateful than the midnight ſhade:
While ſcarce the ſwains their feeding flocks ſurvey,
Loſt and confus'd amidſt the thicken'd day:
So wrapt in gath'ring duſt the Græcian train,
A moving cloud, ſwept on and hid the plain.

When Mars, being wounded by Diomed, flies back to heaven, Homer compares him in his paſſage to a dark cloud raiſed by ſummer heats, and driven by the wind.

Οιη δ' εκ νεφεων ερεβεννη φαινεται αηη,
Καυματος εξ ανεμοιο δυσαεος ορνυμενοιο. IL. v. 864.

The inimitable tranſlator improves this image by throwing in ſome circumſtances, which, though not in the original, are exactly in the ſpirit of Homer:

As vapours, blown by Auſter's ſultry breath,
Pregnant with plagues, and ſhedding ſeeds of death,
Beneath the rage of burning Sirius riſe,
Choak the parch'd earth, and blacken all the ſkies;
In ſuch a cloud the god, from combat driv'n,
High o'er the duſty whirlwind ſcales the heav'n.

There is a deſcription in the eighth book which Euſtathius, it ſeems, eſteemed the moſt beautiful night-piece that could be found in poetry. If I am not greatly miſtaken, however, I can produce a finer:

and

and I am perſuaded even the warmeſt admirer of Homer will allow the following lines are inferior to the correſponding ones in the tranſlation:

Ως δ' οτε εν ϱανω αστϱα φαεινην αμφι σεληνην
Φαινετ' αϱιπϱεπεα, οτε τ' επλετο νηνεμος αιθηϱ,
Εκ τ' ιφανον πασαι σκοπιαι και πϱωονες ακϱοι,
Και ναπαι· ϱανοθεν δ' αϱ' υπεϱϱαϝη απϱωϊλος αιθηϱ,
Παϝλα δε τ' ειδϵλαι αστϱα, γεγηθε δε τε φϱενα ποιμην.
Ιτ. viii. 551.

As when the moon, refulgent lamp of night,
O'er heav'n's clear azure ſpreads her ſacred light;
When not a breath diſturbs the deep ſerene,
And not a cloud o'ercaſts the ſolemn ſcene,
Around her throne the vivid planets roll,
And ſtars unnumber'd gild the glowing pole:
O'er the dark trees a yellower verdure ſhed,
And tip with ſilver ev'ry mountain's head;
Then ſhine the vales, the rocks in proſpect riſe,
A flood of glory burſts from all the ſkies;
The conſcious ſwains, rejoicing in the ſight,
Eye the blue vault, and bleſs the uſeful light.

I fear the enthuſiaſtic admirers of Homer would look upon me with much indignation, were they to hear me ſpeak of any thing in modern language as equal to the ſtrength and majeſty of that great father of poetry. But as the following paſſage has been quoted by a celebrated author of antiquity, as an inſtance of the true Sublime, I will leave it to you to determine whether the tranſlation has not at leaſt as juſt a claim to that character as the original.

Ως δ' οτε χειμαϱϱοι ϖοταμοι κατ' οϱισφι ϱεοντες,
Ες μισγαγκειαν συμβαλλετον οβϱιμον υδωϱ,
Κϱηνων εκ μεγαλων, κοιλης εντοσθε χαϱαδϱης,
Των δε τε τηλοσε δυπον εν ϱεσιν εκλυε ποιμην·
Ως των μισγομενων γενετο ιαχη τε φοβος τε.
As torrents roll, encreas'd by num'rous rills,
With rage impetuous down their echoing hills,
Ruſh to the vales, and, pour'd along the plain,
Roar thro' a thouſand channels to the main;
The diſtant ſhepherd trembling hears the ſound:
So mix both hoſts, and ſo their cries rebound.

There

There is no ancient author more likely to betray an injudicious interpreter into meaneſſes, than Homer; as it requires the utmoſt ſkill and addreſs to preſerve that venerable air of ſimplicity which is one of the characteriſtical marks of that poet, without ſinking the expreſſion or the ſentiment into contempt. Antiquity will furniſh a very ſtrong inſtance of the truth of this obſervation, in a ſingle line which is preſerved to us from a tranſlation of the Iliad by one Labeo, a favourite poet, it ſeems, of Nero: it is quoted by an old ſcholiaſt upon Perſius, and happens to be a verſion of the following paſſage in the fourth book:

Ωμον βιβρωθοις Πριαμον Πριαμοιο τε παιδας.

which Nero's admirable poet rendered literally thus:

Crudum manduces Priamum Priamique piſinnos.

I need not indeed have gone ſo far back for my inſtance: a Labeo of our own nation would have ſupply'd me with one much nearer at hand. Ogilby or Hobbs (I forget which) has tranſlated this very verſe in the ſame ridiculous manner:

And eat up Priam and his children all.

But among many other paſſages of this ſort I obſerv'd one in the ſame book, which rais'd my curioſity to examine in what manner Mr. Pope had conducted it. Juno, in a general council of the gods, thus accoſts Jupiter:

Αινοπατε Κρονιδη, ———

Πως εθελεις αλιον θειναι πονον ηδ' αλεγεινον
Ιδρωθ' ὀν ἱδρωσα μογῳ, καμεῖην δε μοι ἱπποι
Λαον αγειρουσῃ, Πριαμῳ κακα τοιο τε παισιν.

which is as much as if ſhe had ſaid in plain Engliſh, 'Why ſurely, Jupiter, you won't be ſo cruel "as to render ineffectual all my expence of labour "and ſweat. Have I not tired every horſe in my "ſtable in order to raiſe forces to ruin Priam and his "family?" It requires the moſt delicate touches imaginable, to raiſe ſuch a ſentiment as this into any tolerable degree of dignity. But a ſkilful artiſt knows how to embelliſh the moſt ordinary ſubject, and what would be low and ſpiritleſs from a leſs maſterly pen-

pencil, becomes pleaſing and graceful when worked up by Mr. Pope's:

Shall then, O tyrant of th' ethereal plain,
My ſchemes, my labours, and my hopes be vain?
Have I for this ſhook Ilion with alarms,
Aſſembled nations, ſet two worlds in arms?
To ſpread the war I flew from ſhore to ſhore,
Th'immortal courſers ſcarce the labour bore.

But to ſhew you that I am not ſo enthuſiaſtic an admirer of this glorious performance, as to be blind to its imperfections; I will venture to point out a paſſage or two (amongſt others which might be mentioned) wherein Mr. *Pope*'s uſual judgment ſeems to have failed him:

When Iris is ſent to inform Helen that Paris and Menelaus are going to decide the fate of both nations by ſingle combat, and were actually upon the point of engaging; Homer deſcribes her as haſtily throwing her veil over her face and flying to the Scæan gate, from whence ſhe might have a full view of the field of battle:

Αυτικα δ' αργιννησι καλυψαμενη οθοννησιν
Ωρματ' ἐκ θαλαμοιο, τερεν καλα δακρυ χευσα.
Ουκ οιη. ἁμα τηγε και αμφιπολοι δυ' επονο &c.
Αιψα δ' επειθ' ικανον οθι Σκαιαι πυλαι ησαν. Il. iii. 142.

Nothing could poſſibly be more intereſting to Helen than the circumſtances in which ſhe is here repreſented: it was neceſſary therefore to exhibit her, as Homer we ſee has, with much eagerneſs and impetuoſity in her motion. But what can be more calm and quiet than the attitude wherein the Helen of Mr. Pope appears:

O'er her fair face a ſnowy veil ſhe threw,
And ſoftly ſighing from the loom withdrew
Her handmaids —— —— wait
Her ſilent *footſteps to the Scæan gate.*

Thoſe expreſſions of ſpeed and impetuoſity which occur ſo often in the original lines, viz. αυτικα—ωρμαλο—αιψα ικανον would have been ſufficient, one ſhould have imagined, to have guarded a tranſlator from falling into an impropriety of this kind.

This brings to my mind another inſtance of the ſame nature, where our Engliſh poet, by not attending to the

the particular expreſſion of his author, has given us a picture of a very different kind than what Homer intended. In the firſt Iliad the reader is introduced into a council of the Grecian chiefs, where very warm debates ariſe between Agamemnon and Achilles. As nothing was likely to prove more fatal to the Grecians than a diſſention between thoſe two princes, the venerable old Neſtor is repreſented as greatly alarmed at the conſequences of this quarrel, and riſing up to moderate between them with a vivacity beyond his years. This circumſtance Homer has happily intimated by a ſingle word:

——— τοισι δε Νεστωρ
——— ΑΝΘΟΡΟΥΣΕ. ———

Upon which one of the commentators very juſtly obſerves—*ut in re magna et periculoſa, non placidè aſſurgentem facit, ſed* prorumpentem *ſenem quoque.* A circumſtance which Horace ſeems to have had particularly in his view in the epiſtle to Lollius:

——— *Neſtor componere lites*
Inter Peleiden feſtinat *et inter Atriden.*

Ep. i. 2.

But this beauty Mr. Pope has utterly overlooked, and ſubſtituted an idea very different from that which the verb ανορθω ſuggeſts: he renders it,

Slow *from his ſeat aroſe the Pylian ſage.*

But a more unfortunate word could ſcarcely have been joined with *aroſe*, as it deſtroys the whole ſpirit of the piece, and is juſt the reverſe of what both the occaſion and the original required.

I doubt, Euphronius, you are growing weary: will you have patience, however, whilſt I mention one obſervation more? and I will interrupt you no longer.

When Menelaus and Paris enter the liſts, Pope ſays,

Amidſt the dreadful vale the chiefs advance,
All pale with rage, and ſhake the threat'ning lance.

In the original it is,

Εις μεσσον Τρωων και Αχαιων εστιχοωντο
Δεινον δερκομενον. Il. iii. 341.

But does not the expreſſion—*all pale with rage*—call up a very contrary idea to δεινον δερκομενον? The former

mer ſeems to ſuggeſt to one's imagination the ridiculous paſſion of a couple of female ſcolds; whereas the latter conveys the terrifying image of two indignant heroes, animated with calm and deliberate valour. Farewel. I am, &c.

LETTER XII. *To* Cleora.

March 3, 1724.

AFTER having read your laſt letter, I can no longer doubt of the truth of thoſe ſalutary effects, which are ſaid to have been produced by the application of certain written words. I have myſelf experienced the poſſibility of the thing, and a few ſtrokes of your pen have abated a pain, which of all others is the moſt uneaſy, and the moſt difficult to be relieved; even the pain, my Cleora, of the mind. To ſympathize with my ſufferings, as Cleora kindly aſſures me ſhe does, is to aſſuage them; and half the uneaſineſs of her abſence is removed, when ſhe tells me that ſhe regrets mine.

Since I thus aſſuredly find that you can work miracles, I will believe likewiſe that you have the gift of prophecy; and I can no longer deſpair that the time will come, when we ſhall again meet, ſince you have abſolutely pronounced that it will. I have ventured, therefore (as you will ſee by my laſt letter) already to name the day. In the mean while I amuſe myſelf with doing every thing that looks like a preparation for my journey; *e gia aprò le braccia per ſtringirvi affettuoſamante al mio ſenno.*

The truth is, you are every inſtant in my thoughts, and each occurrence that ariſes, ſuggeſts you to my remembrance. If I ſee a clear ſky I wiſh it may extend to you, and if I obſerve a cloudy one, I am uneaſy leſt my Cleora ſhould be expoſed to it. I never read an intereſting ſtory, or a pertinent remark, that I do not long to communicate it to you, and learn to double my reliſh by hearing your judicious obſervations. I cannot take a turn inmy garden, but every walk calls you into my mind. Ah Cleora! I never view thoſe ſcenes

of

of our former converſations, without a ſigh. Judge then how often I ſigh, when every object that ſurrounds me brings you freſh to my imagination. You remember the attitude in which the faithful Penelope is drawn in Pope's Odyſſey, when ſhe goes to fetch the bow of Ulyſſes for the ſuitors:

Acroſs her knees ſhe lay'd the well-known bow,
And penſive ſate, and tears began to flow.

I find myſelf in numberleſs ſuch tender reveries; and if I were ever ſo much diſpoſed to baniſh you from my thoughts, it would be impoſſible, I ſhould do ſo in a place where every thing that preſents itſelf to me, reminds me that you were once here. I muſt not expect (I ought not indeed, for the ſake of your repoſe to wiſh) to be thus frequently and thus fondly the ſubject of your meditations: but may I not hope that you employ a few moments at leaſt of every day, in thinking of him whoſe whole attention is fixed upon you?

I have ſent you the hiſtory of the Conqueſt of Mexico, in Engliſh, which, as it is tranſlated by ſo good a hand, will be equally pleaſing and leſs troubleſome, than reading it in the original. I long to be of this party in your expedition to the new world, as I lately was in your conqueſts of Italy. How happily could I ſet by Cleora's ſide, and purſue the Spaniards in their triumphs, as I formerly did the Romans; or make a tranſition from a nation of heroes to a republic of ants! Glorious days indeed! when we paſſed whole mornings either with dictators or butterflie; and ſometimes ſent out a colony of Romans, and ſometimes of emmits! Adieu, I am, &c.

LETTER XIII. *To* Palemon.

Dec. 18, 1722.

THOUGH I am not convinced by your arguments, I am charmed by your eloquence, and I admire the preacher at the ſame time that I condemn the doctrine. But there is no ſort of perſons whoſe opinions one is more inclined to wiſh right, than thoſe who are

ingeniouſly in the wrong; who have the art to add grace to error, and can dignify miſtakes.

Forgive me then, Palemon, if I am more than commonly ſolicitous that you ſhould review the ſentiments you advanced (I will not ſay, ſupported) with ſo much elegance in your laſt letter, and that I preſs you to reconſider your notions again and again. Can I fail, indeed, to wiſh that you may find reaſon to renounce an opinion, which may poſſibly one day or other deprive me of a friend, and my country of a patriot? while Providence, perhaps, would yet have ſpared him to both. Can I fail to regret, that I ſhould hold one of the moſt valuable enjoyments of my life, upon a tenure more than ordinarily precarious, and that beſides thoſe numberleſs accidents by which chance may ſnatch you from the world, a gloomy ſky or a croſs event may determine Palemon to put an end to a life, which all who have been a witneſs to muſt for ever admire.

But, "Does the Supreme being (you aſk) diſpenſe "his bounty upon conditions different from all other "benefactors, and will he force a gift upon me which "is no longer acceptable?"

Let me demand in return, Whether a creature, ſo confined in its perceptions as man, may not miſtake his true intereſt, and reject, from a partial regard, what would be well worth accepting upon a more comprehenſive view? May not even a mortal benefactor better underſtand the value of that preſent he offers, than the perſon to whom it is tendered? And ſhall the ſupreme author of all beneficence be eſteemed leſs wiſe in diſtinguiſhing the worth of thoſe grants he confers? I agree with you, indeed, that we were called into exiſtence in order to receive happineſs, but I can by no means infer from thence, that we are at liberty to reſign our being whenever it becomes a burden. On the contrary, thoſe premiſſes ſeem to lead to a concluſion directly oppoſite; and if the gracious author of my life created me with an intent to make me happy, does it not neceſſarily follow, that I ſhall moſt certainly obtain that privilege, if I do not juſtly forfeit it by my own miſconduct? Numberleſs ends may be anſwered

in

in the ſchemes of Providence by turning aſide or interrupting that ſtream of bounty, which our limited reaſon can in no ſort diſcover. How preſumptuous then muſt it be, to throw back a grant upon the hands of the great governor of the univerſe, merely becauſe we do not immediately feel or underſtand its full advantages!

That it is the intention of the Deity we ſhould remain in this ſtate of being, till his ſummons calls us away, ſeems as evident as that we at firſt entered into it by his command: for we can no more continue, than we could begin to exiſt, without the concurrence of the ſame ſupreme interpoſition. While, therefore, the animal powers do not ceaſe to perform thoſe functions to which they were directed by their great author, it may juſtly, I think, be concluded that it is his deſign they ſhould not.

Still, however, you urge, "That by putting a period to "your own exiſtence here, you only alter the modifica-"tion of matter; and how (you aſk) is the order of Pro-"vidence diſturbed by changing the combination of a "parcel of atoms from one figure to another?"

But ſurely, Palemon, there is a fallacy in this reaſoning: ſuicide is ſomething more than changing the component parts of the animal machine. It is ſtriking out a ſpiritual ſubſtance from that rank of beings, wherein the wiſe author of nature has placed it, and forcibly breaking in upon ſome other order of exiſtence. And as it is impoſſible for the limited powers of reaſon to penetrate the ſchemes of Providence, it can never be proved that this is not diſturbing the ſchemes of nature. We poſſibly may be, and indeed moſt probably are, connected with ſome higher rank of creatures: now philoſophy will never be able to determine that thoſe connections may not be diſconcerted by prematurely quitting our preſent manſion.

One of the ſtrongeſt paſſions implanted in human nature, is the fear of death. It ſeems, indeed, to be placed by Providence as a ſort of guard to retain mankind within their appointed ſtation. Why elſe ſhould it ſo univerſally and almoſt invariably operate? It is obſervable that no ſuch affection appears in any ſpecies of beings below us. They have no temptation, or no ability, to deſert the poſt

aſſigned to them, and therefore, it ſhould ſeem, they have no checks of this kind to keep them within their preſcribed limits. This general horrour then in mankind at the apprehenſion of their diſſolution, carries with it, I think, a very ſtrong preſumptive argument in favour of the opinion I am endeavouring to maintain. For if it were not given to us for the purpoſe I have ſuppoſed, what other can it ſerve? Can it be imagined that the benevolent author of nature would have ſo deeply wove it into our conſtitution, only to interrupt our preſent enjoyments?

I cannot, I confeſs, diſcover how the practice of ſuicide can be juſtified upon any principle, except that of downright atheiſm. If we ſuppoſe a good Providence to govern the world, the conſequence is undeniable, that we muſt entirely rely upon it. If we imagine an evil one to prevail, what chance is there of finding that happineſs in another ſcene which we have in vain ſought for in this? The ſame malevolent omnipotence can as eaſily purſue us in the next remove, as perſecute us in this our firſt ſtation.

Upon the whole, Palemon, prudence ſtrongly forbids ſo hazardous an experiment as that of being our own executioners. We know the worſt that can happen in ſupporting life under all its moſt wretched circumſtances: and if we ſhould be miſtaken in thinking it our duty to endure a load, which in truth we may ſecurely lay down; it is an error extremely limited in its conſequences. They cannot extend beyond this preſent exiſtence, and poſſibly may end much earlier: whereas no mortal can with the leaſt degree of aſſurance pronounce what may not be the effects of acting agreeably to the contrary opinion. I am, &c.

LETTER XIV. *To* Clytander.

Sept. 21, 1723.

I Am by no means in the ſentiments of that Grecian of your acquaintance, who as often as he was preſſed to marry, replied either that it was too ſoon or too late. And I think my favourite author, the honeſt Montagne, a little too ſevere when he obſerves upon this ſtory, *qu'il faut refuſer l'opportunité a toute action importune*: For,

—— *higher*

——— *higher of the genial bed by far,*
And with myſterious reverence I deem. MILTON.

However, I am not adventurous enough to join with thoſe friends you mention, who are ſoliciting you, it ſeems, to look out for an engagement of this kind. It is an union which requires ſo much delicacy in the cementing; it is a commerce where ſo many nice circumſtances muſt concur to render it ſucceſsful, that I would not venture to pronounce of any two perſons, that they are qualified for each other.

I do not know a woman in the world who ſeems more formed to render a man of ſenſe and generoſity happy in this ſtate, than Amaſia; yet I ſhould ſcarcely have courage to recommend even Amaſia to my friend. You have ſeen her, I dare ſay, a thouſand times; but I am perſuaded ſhe never attracted your particular obſervation: for ſhe is in the number of thoſe who are ever overlooked in a crowd. As often as I converſe with her, ſhe puts me in mind of the golden age: there is an innocency and ſimplicity in all her words and actions, that equals any thing the poets have deſcribed of thoſe pure and artleſs times. Indeed the greateſt part of her life has been ſpent much in the ſame way as the early inhabitants of the world, in that blameleſs period of it, uſed, we are told, to diſpoſe of theirs; under the ſhade and ſhelter of her own venerable oaks, and in thoſe rural amuſements which are ſure to produce a confirmed habit both of health and chearfulneſs. Amaſia never ſaid, or attempted to ſay, a ſprightly thing in all her life; but ſhe has done ten thouſand generous ones; and if ſhe is not the moſt conſpicuous figure at an aſſembly, ſhe never envied or maligned thoſe who are. Her heart is all tenderneſs and benevolence; no ſucceſs ever attended any of her acquaintance which did not fill her boſom with the moſt diſintereſted complacency; as no misfortune ever reached her knowledge, that ſhe did not relieve or participate by her generoſity. If ever ſhe ſhould fall into the hands of a man ſhe loves (and I am perſuaded ſhe would eſteem it the worſt kind of proſtitution to reſign herſelf into any other) her whole life would be one continued ſeries of kindneſs and compliance. The humble

opinion ſhe has of her own uncommon merit, would make her ſo much the more ſenſible of her husband's; and thoſe little ſubmiſſions, which a woman of more pride and ſpirit would conſider only as a claim of right, would be eſteemed by Amaſia as ſo many additional motives to her love and gratitude.

But if I dwell any longer upon this amiable picture, I may be in danger, perhaps, of reſembling that ancient artiſt, who grew enamoured of the production of his own pencil: for my ſecurity, therefore, as well as to put an end to your trouble, it will be beſt, I believe, to ſtop here. I am, &c.

LETTER XV. *To* Phidippus.

YES, Phidippus, I entirely agree with you: the ancients moſt certainly had much loftier notions of Friendſhip, than ſeem to be generally entertained at preſent. But may they not juſtly be conſidered on this ſubject, as downright enthuſiaſts? Whilſt indeed they talk of friendſhip as a virtue, or place it in a rank little inferiour, I can admire the generous warmth of their ſentiments: but when they go ſo far as to make it a ſerious queſtion, whether juſtice herſelf ought not in ſome particular caſes to yield to this their ſupreme affection of the heart; there, I confeſs, they leave me far behind.

If we had not a treatiſe extant upon this ſubject, we ſhould ſcarce believe this fact upon the credit of thoſe authors who have delivered it down to us: but Cicero himſelf has ventured to take the affirmative ſide of this debate in his celebrated dialogue inſcribed Lælius. He followed, it ſeems, in this notion the ſentiments of the Grecian Theophraſtus, who publickly maintained the ſame aſtoniſhing theory.

It muſt be confeſſed however, theſe admirers of the falſe ſublime in friendſhip, talk upon this ſubject with ſo much caution and in ſuch general terms, that one is inclined to think they themſelves a little ſuſpected the validity of thoſe very principles they would inculcate. We find, at leaſt, a remarkable inſtance to that purpoſe, in a circumſtance related of Chilo, one of thoſe famous ſages who

who are diſtinguiſhed by the pompous title of the wiſe men of Greece.

That celebrated philoſopher being upon his death-bed, addreſſed himſelf, we are informed, to his friends who ſtood round him, to the following effect: "I cannot "through the courſe of a long life, look back with un-"eaſineſs upon any ſingle inſtance of my conduct, unleſs, "perhaps, on that which I am going to mention, where-"in, I confeſs, I am ſtill doubtful whether I acted as I "ought, or not: I was once appointed Judge in con-"junction with two others, when my particular friend "was arraigned before us. Were the laws to have ta-"ken their free courſe, he muſt inevitably have been "condemned to die. After much debate therefore with "myſelf, I reſolved upon this expedient: I gave my "own vote according to my conſcience, but at the ſame "time employed all my eloquence to prevail with my "aſſociates to abſolve the criminal. Now I cannot but "reflect upon this act with concern, as fearing there was "ſomething of perfidy, in perſuading others to go coun-"ter to what I myſelf eſteemed right."

It does not, certainly, require any great depth of caſuiſtry to pronounce upon a caſe of this nature. And yet, had Tully, that great maſter of reaſon, been Chilo's confeſſor upon this occaſion, it is very plain he would have given him abſolution, to the juſt ſcandal of the moſt ignorant curate that ever lulled a country village.

What I have here obſerved, will ſuggeſt, if I miſtake not, a very clear anſwer to the queſtion you propoſe; "Whence it ſhould happen that we meet with inſtances "of friendſhip among the Greeks and Romans, far ſu-"periour to any thing of the ſame kind which modern "times have produced?" For while the greateſt geniuſes among them employed their talents in exalting this noble affection, and it was encouraged even by the laws themſelves; what effects might one not expect to ariſe from the concurrence of ſuch powerful cauſes? The ſeveral examples of this kind which you have pointed out, are undoubtedly highly animating and ſingular; to which give me leave to add one inſtance no leſs remarkable, tho', I think, not ſo commonly obſerved:

Eudamidas the Corinthian (as the ſtory is related in Lucian's Toxaris) tho' in low circumſtances himſelf, was happy in the friendſhip of two very wealthy perſons, Charixenus and Aretheus. Eudamidas, finding himſelf drawing near his end, made his will in the following terms: "I leave my mother to Aretheus, to be maintained and protected by him in her old age. I bequeath to Charixenus the care of my daughter; deſiring that he would ſee her diſpoſed of in marriage, and portion her at the ſame time with as ample a fortune as his circumſtances ſhall admit: and, in caſe of the death of either of theſe my two friends, I ſubſtitute the ſurvivor in his place."

This will was looked upon by ſome (as we may well imagine) to be extremely ridiculous; however the legatees received information of it with very different ſentiments, accepting of their reſpective legacies with great ſatisfaction. It happened that Charixenus died a few days after his friend the teſtator; the ſurvivorſhip therefore taking place in favour of Aretheus, he accordingly not only took upon himſelf the care of his friend's mother, but alſo made an equal diſtribution of his eſtate between this child of Eudamidas, and an only daughter of his own, ſolemnizing both their marriages on the ſame day.

I do not recollect that any of the moderns have raiſed their notions of friendſhip to theſe extravagant heights, excepting only a very ſingular French author, who talks in a more romantic ſtrain upon this ſubject than even the ancients themſelves. Could you, Philippus, believe a man in earneſt, who ſhould aſſert that the ſecret one has ſwore never to reveal, may without perjury be diſcovered to one's friend? Yet the honeſt Montagne has ventured gravely to advance this extraordinary doctrine in clear and poſitive terms. But I never knew a ſenſible man in my life, that was not an enthuſiaſt upon ſome favourite point; as indeed there is none where it is more excuſable than in the article of friendſhip. It is that which affords the moſt pleaſing ſun-ſhine of our days; if therefore we ſee it now and then break out with a more than reaſonable warmth and luſtre, who is there that will not be inclined

to

to pardon an exceſs, which can only flow from the moſt generous principles? Adieu. I am, &c.

LETTER XVI. *To the ſame.*

July 3, 1716.

WHEN I mentioned *grace* as eſſential in conſtituting a fine writer, I rather hoped to have found my ſentiments reflected back with a clearer light by yours; than imagined you would have called upon me to explain in form, what I only threw out by accident. To confeſs the truth, I know not whether, after all that can be ſaid to illuſtrate this uncommon quality, it muſt not at laſt be reſolved into the poet's *nequeo monſtrare & ſentio tantùm.* In caſes of this kind, where language does not ſupply us with proper words to expreſs the notions of one's mind, we can only convey our ſentiments in figurative terms: a defect which neceſſarily introduces ſome obſcurity.

I will not, therefore, undertake to mark out with any ſort of preciſion, that idea which I would expreſs by the word *grace*; and, perhaps, it can no more be clearly deſcribed, than juſtly defined. To give you, however, a general intimation of what I mean when I apply that term to compoſitions of genius, I would reſemble it to that eaſy air, which ſo remarkably diſtinguiſhes certain perſons of a genteel and liberal caſt. It conſiſts not only in the particular beauty of ſingle parts, but ariſes from the general ſymmetry and conſtruction of the whole. An author may be juſt in his ſentiments, lively in his figures, and clear in his expreſſion; yet may have no claim to be admitted into the rank of finiſhed writers. Thoſe ſeveral members muſt be ſo agreeably united as mutually to reflect beauty upon each other: their arrangement muſt be ſo happily diſpoſed as not to admit of the leaſt tranſpoſition without manifeſt prejudice to the entire piece. The thoughts, the metaphors, the alluſions, and the diction ſhould appear eaſy and natural, and ſeem to ariſe like ſo many ſpontaneous productions, rather than as the effects of art or labour.

Whatever therefore is forced or affected in the ſentiments; whatever is pompous or pedantic in the expreſ-

ſion, is the very reverſe of *grace*. Her mien is neither that of a prude nor a coquet; ſhe is regular without formality, and ſprightly without being fantaſtical. Grace, in ſhort, is to good writing, what a proper light is to a fine picture; it not only ſhews all the figures in their ſeveral proportions and relations, but ſhews them in the moſt advantageous manner.

As genteelity (to reſume my former illuſtration) appears in the minuteſt action, and improves the moſt inconſiderable geſture; ſo *grace* is diſcovered in the placing even of a ſingle word, or the turn of a meer expletive. Neither is this inexpreſſible quality confined to one ſpecies of compoſition only, but extends to all the various kinds; to the humble Paſtoral as well as to the lofty Epic; from the ſlighteſt letter to the moſt ſolemn diſcourſe.

I know not whether Sir William Temple may not be conſidered as the firſt of our proſe authors, who introduced a graceful *manner* into our language. At leaſt that quality does not ſeem to have appeared early, or ſpread far, amongſt us. But whereſoever we may look for its origin, it is certainly to be found in its higheſt perfection in the late eſſays of a gentleman whoſe writings will be diſtinguiſhed ſo long as politeneſs and good ſenſe have any admirers. That becoming air which Tully eſteemed the criterion of fine compoſition, and which every reader, he ſays, imagins ſo eaſy to be imitated, yet will find ſo difficult to attain, is the prevailing characteriſtic of all that excellent author's moſt elegant performances. In a word, one may juſtly apply to him what Plato, in his allegorical language, ſays of Ariſtophanes; that the *Graces*, having ſearched all the world round for a temple wherein they might for ever dwell, ſettled at laſt in the breaſt of Mr. Addiſon. Adieu. I am, &c.

LETTER XVII. *To* Palamedes.

Nov. 4, 1720.

THE dawn is overcaſt, the morning lours
And heavily with clouds brings on the day —

How then can I better diſappoint the gloomy effects of a louring ſky, than by calling my thoughts off from the dull

dull ſcene before me, and placing them upon an object which I always conſider with pleaſure? Much, certainly, are we indebted to that happy faculty, by which, with a ſort of magic power, we can bring before one's mind whatever has been the ſubject of its moſt agreeable contemplation. In vain, therefore, would that lovely dame, who has ſo often been the topic of our converſations, pretend to enjoy you to herſelf: in ſpight of your favourite philoſophy, or even of a more powerful divinity; in ſpight of Fortune herſelf, I can place you in my view, though half a century of miles lies between us. But am I for ever to be indebted to imagination only for your preſence? and will you not ſometimes let me owe that pleaſure to your ſelf? Surely you might ſpare me a few weeks before the ſummer ends, without any inconvenience to that noble plan upon which I know you are ſo intent. As for my own ſtudies, they go on but ſlowly; I am like a traveller without a guide in an unknown country, obliged to enquire the way at every turning, and conſequently cannot advance with all the expedition I wiſh. Adieu. I am, &c.

LETTER XVIII. *To* Palemon.

May 28, 1718.

IS it poſſible you can thus deſcend from the higheſt concerns to the loweſt, and after deliberating upon the affairs of Europe, have the humility to enquire into mine? But the greateſt ſtateſmen, it ſeems, have their trifling as well as their ſerious hours; and I have read of a Roman conſul that amuſed himſelf with gathering cockle-ſhells, and of a Spartan monarch who was found riding upon a hobby-horſe. Or ſhall I rather ſay, that friendſhip gilds every object upon which ſhe ſhines? As it is the ſingular character of Palemon to preſerve that generous flame in all its ſtrength and luſtre amidſt that ambitious atmoſphere, which is generally eſteemed ſo unfavourable to every brighter affection.

It is upon one or other of thoſe principles alone, that you can be willing to ſuſpend your own more important engagements by attending to an account of mine. They have

have lately indeed been more diverſified than uſual, and I have paſſed theſe three months in a continual ſucceſſion of new ſcenes. The moſt agreeable, as well as the fartheſt part of my progreſs, was to the ſeat of Hortenſius; and I am perſuaded you will not think my travels have been in vain, ſince they afford me an opportunity of informing you, that our friend is in poſſeſſion of all that happineſs which I am ſure you wiſh him. It is probable however, you have not yet heard that he owes the chief part of it to female merit: for his marriage was concluded even before thoſe friends who are moſt frequently with him, had the leaſt ſuſpicion of his intenſions. But though he had ſome reaſons for concealing his deſigns, he has none for being aſhamed of them now they are executed. I ſay not this from any haſty approbation, but as having long known and eſteemed the lady whom he has choſen: and as there is a pleaſure in bringing two perſons of merit to the knowledge of each other, will you allow me, in the remainder of this letter, to introduce her to your acquaintance?

Hortensia is of a good ſtature, and perfectly well proportioned; but one cannot ſo properly ſay her air is genteel, as that it is pleaſing: for there is a certain unaffected careleſsneſs in her dreſs and mien that wins by degrees rather than ſtrikes at firſt ſight. If you were to look no farther than the upper part of her face, you would think her handſome; were you only to examine the lower, you would immediately pronounce the reverſe; yet there is ſomething in her eyes which, without any pretence to be called fine, give ſuch an agreeable livelineſs to her whole countenance, that you ſcarce obſerve, or ſoon forget, all her features are not regular. Her converſation is rather cheerful than gay, and more inſtructive than ſprightly. But the principal and moſt diſtinguiſhed faculties of her mind are her memory and her judgment, both which ſhe poſſeſſes in a far higher degree than one uſually finds even in perſons of our ſex. She has read moſt of the capital authors both in French and Engliſh; but her chief and favourite companions of that kind have lain among the hiſtorical and dramatic writers. There is hardly a remarkable event in ancient or modern ſtory, of which ſhe cannot give a very clear and judicious account;

count; as ſhe is equally well verſed in all the principal characters and incidents of the moſt approved ſtage compoſitions. The mathematics is not wholly a ſtranger to her; and tho' ſhe did not think proper to purſue her enquiries of that kind, to any great length; yet the very uncommon facility with which ſhe entered into the reaſonings of that ſcience, plainly diſcovered ſhe was capable of attaining a thorough knowledge of all its moſt abſtruſe branches. Her taſte in performances of polite literature is always juſt, and ſhe is an excellent critic without knowing any thing of the artificial rules of that ſcience. Her obſervations therefore upon ſubjects of that ſort, are ſo much the more to be relied upon as they are the pure and unbias'd dictates of nature and good ſenſe. Accordingly Hortenſius, in the ſeveral pieces which you know, he has publiſhed, conſtantly had recourſe to her judgment; and I have often heard him upon thoſe occaſions apply, with ſingular pleaſure, and with equal truth, what the tender Propertius ſays of his favourite Cynthia:

Me juvat in gremio doctæ legiſſe puellæ,
Auribus et puris ſcripta probaſſe mea:
Hæc ubi contigerint, populi confuſa valeto
Fabula; nam, domina judice, tutus ero.

But her uncommon ſtrength of underſtanding has preſerved her from that fatal rock of all female knowledge, the impertinent oſtentation of it: and ſhe thinks a reſerve in this article as an eſſential part of that modeſty which is the ornament of her ſex. I have heard her obſerve, that it is not in the acquired endowments of the female mind, as in the beauties of her perſon, where it may be ſufficient praiſe, perhaps, to follow the example of the virgin deſcribed by Taſſo, who,

Non copre ſue bellezze, e non l'eſpoſe.

On the contrary ſhe eſteems it a point of decency to throw a veil over the ſuperior charms of her underſtanding: and if ever ſhe draws it aſide, you plainly perceive it is rather to gratify her good nature than her vanity; leſs in compliance with her own inclinations, than with thoſe of her company.

Her refined ſenſe and extenſive knowledge has not, however, raiſed her above the more neceſſary acquiſitions

of

of female ſcience: it has only taught her to fill that part of her character with higher grace and dignity. She enters into all the domeſtic duties of her ſtation with the moſt conſummate ſkill and prudence. Her œconomical deportment is calm and ſteddy; and ſhe preſides over her family like the intelligence of ſome planetary orb, conducting it in all its proper directions without violence or diſturbed efforts.

Theſe qualities, however conſiderable they might appear in a leſs ſhining character, are but under-parts in Hortenſia's: for it is from the virtues of her heart that ſhe derives her moſt irreſiſtible claim to eſteem and approbation. A conſtant flow of uniform and unaffected chearfulneſs gladdens her own breaſt, and enlivens that of every creature around her. Her behaviour under the injuries ſhe has received (for injuries even the blameleſs Hortenſia has received) was with all the calm fortitude of the moſt heroick patience; as ſhe firmly relied that Providence would either put an end to her misfortunes, or ſupport her under them. And with that elevated hope ſhe ſeemed to feel leſs for herſelf, than for the unjuſt and inhuman author of her ſufferings, generouſly lamenting to ſee one, ſo nearly related to her, ſtand condemned by that ſevereſt and moſt ſignificant of ſentences, the united reproaches of the world and of his conſcience.

Thus, Palemon, I have given you a faithful copy of an excellent original: but whether you will join with me in thinking my pencil has been true to its ſubject, muſt be left to ſome future opportunity to determine. I am, &c.

LETTER XIX. *To* Hortenſius.

Dec. 10, 1730.

I Have read over the treatiſe you recommended to me, with attention and concern. I was ſorry to find an author, who ſeems ſo well qualified to ſerve the cauſe of truth, employing his talents in favour of what appears to me a moſt dangerous error. I have often wondered, indeed, at the policy of certain philoſophers of this caſt, who endeavour to advance religion by depreciating human nature. Methinks it would be more for the intereſt

of

of virtue, to repreſent her congenial (as congenial ſhe ſurely is) with our make, and agreeable to our untainted conſtitution of ſoul; to prove that every deviation from moral rectitude is an oppoſition to our native bias, and contrary to thoſe characters of dignity which the Creator has univerſally impreſſed upon the mind. This, at leaſt, was the principle which many of the ancient philoſophers laboured to inculcate; as there is not, perhaps, any ſingle topick in ethics that might be urged with more truth or greater efficacy.

It is upon this generous and exalted notion of our ſpecies, that one of the nobleſt precepts of the excellent Pythagoras is founded: Παντων δε μαλιστα (ſays that philoſopher) αισχυνεο σ'αυτον. The firſt and leading diſpoſition to engage us on the ſide of virtue was, in that ſage's eſtimation, to preſerve above all things a conſtant reverence of our own mind, and to dread nothing ſo much as to offend againſt its native dignity. The ingenious Mr. Norris, I remember, recommends this precept as one of the beſt, perhaps, that was ever given to the world. May one not juſtly then be ſurpriſed to find it ſo ſeldom enforced in our modern ſyſtems of morality? To confeſs the truth, I am ſtrongly inclined to ſuſpect, that much of that general contempt of every manly principle, which ſo remarkably diſtinguiſhes the preſent times, may fairly be attributed to the humour of diſcarding this animating notion of our kind. It has been the faſhion to paint human nature in the harſheſt and moſt unpleaſing colours. Yet there is not, ſurely, any argument more likely to induce a man to act unworthily than to perſuade him that he has nothing of innate worthineſs in his genuine diſpoſition; than to reaſon him out of every elevated notion of his own grandeur of ſoul; and to deſtroy, in ſhort, every motive that might juſtly inſpire him with a principle of ſelf-reverence: that ſureſt *internal* guard Heaven ſeems to have aſſigned to the human virtues. Farewel. I am, &c.

LETTER XX. *To* Clytander.

July 1, 1717.

DID you imagine I was really in earneſt, when I talked of quitting the ſplendours of a court, and

withdrawing from thoſe gilded proſpects which ambition had once ſo ſtrongly ſet in my view? But my vows, you ſee, are not in the number of thoſe which are made to be broken; for the retreat I had long meditated, is now, at laſt, happily executed. To ſay truth, my friend, the longer I lived in the high ſcenes of action, the more I was convinced that nature had not formed me for bearing a part in them: and though I was once ſo unexperienced in the ways of the world as to believe I had talents, as I was ſure I had Inclination, to ſerve my country, yet every day's converſation contributed to wean me by degrees from that flattering deluſion.

How indeed could a man hope to render himſelf acceptable to the various parties which divide our nation, who profeſſes it as his principle, that there is no ſtriking wholly into the meaſures of any, without renouncing either ones ſenſe or ones integrity? And yet, as the world is at preſent conſtituted, it is ſcarce poſſible, I fear, to do any good in ones generation (in publick life I mean) without liſting under ſome or other of thoſe various banners, which diſtinguiſh the ſeveral corps in theſe our political warfares. To thoſe therefore, who may have curioſity enough to enter into my concerns, and aſk a reaſon for my quitting the town, I anſwer in the words of the hiſtorian, *Civitatis morum tædet pigetque.*—But I am wandering from the purpoſe of my letter, which was not ſo much to juſtify my retreat, as to incline you to follow me into it: to follow me, I mean, as a viſitor only; for I love my country too well to call you off from thoſe great ſervices you are capable of doing her.

I have pitched my tent upon a ſpot which I am perſuaded will not diſpleaſe you. My villa (if you will allow me to call by that fine name, what in truth is no better than a neat farm-houſe) is ſituated upon a gentle riſe, which commands a ſhort, though agreeable view of about three miles in circumference. This is bounded on the north by a ridge of hills which afford me at once both a ſecure ſhelter and a beautiful proſpect; for they are as well cultivated as the moſt fertile valleys. In the front of my houſe, which ſtands ſouth-eaſt, I have a view of the river that runs, at the diſtance of ſomething leſs than

a quarter

a quarter of a mile, at the end of my grounds; and after making ſeveral windings and returns, ſeems to loſe itſelf at the foot of thoſe hills I juſt mentioned. As for my garden, I am obliged to nature for its chief beauties; having no other (except a ſmall ſpot which I have allotted for the purpoſes of my table) but what the fields and meadows afford. Thoſe however, I have embelliſhed with ſome care, having intermixed among the hedges all the ſeveral ſorts of flowering ſhrubs.

But I muſt not forget to mention what I look upon to be the principal ornament of the place; as indeed I do not recollect to have ſeen any thing of the kind in our Engliſh plantations. I have covered a ſmall ſpot with different ſorts of ever-greens, many of which are of a ſpecies not very uſual in our country. This little plantation I have branched out into various labyrinth walks, which are all terminated by a ſmall temple in the centre. I have a double advantage from this artificial wood; for it not only affords me a very ſhady retreat in ſummer, but, as it is ſituated oppoſite to my library, ſupplies me in winter with a perſpective of the moſt agreeable verdure imaginable.

What heightens my reliſh of this retirement, is the company of my Cleora; as indeed many of the beſt improvements I have made in it, are owing to hints which I have received from her exquiſite taſte and judgment. She will rejoice to receive you as her gueſt here; and has given it me in charge to remind you, that you have promiſed to be ſo. As the buſineſs of Parliament is now drawing to a concluſion, I may urge this to you without any imputations upon my patriotiſm; tho' at the ſame time I muſt add, I make a very conſiderable ſacrifice of private intereſt whenever I reſign you for the ſake of the publick. Adieu. I am, &c.

LETTER XXI. *To* Hortenſius.

Nov. 7, 1730.

YOUR admired poet, I remember, ſomewhere lays it down as a maxim, that

The proper ſtudy of mankind is man.

There

There cannot indeed be a more uſeful, nor one ſhould imagine a more eaſy ſcience: ſo many leſſons of this kind are every moment forcing themſelves upon our obſervation, that it ſhould ſeem ſcarce poſſible not to be well acquainted with the various turns and diſpoſitions of the human heart. And yet there are ſo few who are really adepts in this article, that to ſay of a man, *he knows the world*, is generally eſteemed a compliment of the moſt ſignificant kind.

The reaſon, perhaps, of the general ignorance, which prevails in this ſort of knowledge, may ariſe from our judging too much by univerſal principles. Whereas there is a wonderful diſparity in mankind, and numberleſs characters exiſt which cannot properly be reduced to any regular and fixed ſtandard. Monſieur Paſchal obſerves, that the greater ſagacity any man poſſeſſes, the more originals he will diſcern among his ſpecies; as it is the remark of Sir William Temple, that no nation under the ſun abounds with ſo many as our own. Plutarch, if I remember right, is of opinion that there is a wider difference between the individuals of our kind, than what is obſervable between creatures of a ſeparate order; while Montagne (who ſeems to have known human nature perfectly well) ſuppoſes the diſtance to be ſtill more remote, and aſſerts that the diſtinction is much greater between man and man than between man and beaſt.

The comic writers have not, I think, taken all the advantage they might of this infinite diverty of humour in the human race. A judicious obſerver of the world might ſingle out abundant materials for ridicule, without having recourſe to thoſe worn-out characters which are for ever returning upon the ſtage. If I were acquainted with any genius in this claſs of writers, I think I could furniſh him with an original, which, if artfully repreſented and connected with proper incidents, might be very ſucceſsfully introduced into comedy. The perſon I have in view is my neighbour Stilotes.

Stilotes in his youth was eſteemed to have good ſenſe and a tolerable taſte for letters; as he gained ſome reputation at the Univerſity in the exerciſes uſual at that place. But as ſoon as he was freed from the reſtraint of tutors, the

the natural reſtleſſneſs of his temper broke out, and he has never, from that time to this, applied himſelf for half an hour together to any ſingle purſuit. He is extremely active in his diſpoſition; but his whole life is one inceſſant whirl of trifles. He riſes, perhaps, with a full intent of amuſing himſelf all the morning with his gun; but before he has got half the length of a field, he recollects that he owes a viſit which he muſt inſtantly pay: accordingly his horſe is ſaddled and he ſets out. But in his way he remembers that he has not given proper orders about ſuch a flower, and he muſt abſolutely return, or the whole œconomy of his nurſery will be ruined. Thus, in whatever action you find him engaged, you may be ſure it is the very reverſe of what he propoſed. Yet with all this quickneſs of tranſition and vivacity of ſpirits, he is ſo indolent in every thing that has the air of buſineſs, that he is at leaſt two or three months before he can perſuade himſelf to open any letter he receives: and from the ſame diſpoſition he has ſuffered the dividends of his ſtock to run on for many years without receiving a ſhilling of the intereſt. Stilotes is poſſeſſed of an eſtate in Dorſetſhire, but that being the place where his chief buſineſs lies, he chooſes conſtantly to reſide with a relation near London. This perſon ſubmits to his humour and his company in hopes that Stilotes will conſider him in his will, but it is more than poſſible, that he will never endure the fatigue of ſigning one. However, having here every thing provided for him but clothes and pocket money, he lives perfectly to his ſatisfaction, in full employment without any real buſineſs; and while thoſe who look after his eſtate take care to ſupply him with ſufficient to anſwer thoſe two articles, he is entirely unconcerned as to all the reſt: though when he is diſpoſed to appear more than ordinarily important he will very gravely harangue upon the roguery of ſtewards, and complain that his rents will ſcarce maintain him in powder and ſhot half the partridge ſeaſon. In ſhort, Stilotes is one of the moſt extraordinary compounds of indolence and activity that I ever met with; and as I know you have a taſte for curioſities, I preſent you with his character as a rarity

a rarity that merits a place in your collection. Adieu, I am, &c.

LETTER XXII. *To* Philotes.

Auguſt 5, 1724.

DON'T you begin to think that I ill deſerve the preſcription you ſent me, ſince I have ſcarce had the manners even to thank you for it? I muſt confeſs I have neglected to *honour my phyſician with the honour due unto him*; that is, I have omitted, not only what I ought to have performed in good breeding, but what I am expreſly enjoined by my Bible. I am not, however, entirely without excuſe: a ſilly one, I own; nevertheleſs it is the truth. I have lately been a good deal out of ſpirits. But at length the fit is over. Amongſt the number of thoſe things which are wanting to ſecure me from a return of it, I muſt always reckon the company of my friend. I have indeed frequent occaſion for you: not in the way of your profeſſion, but in a better; in the way of friendſhip. There is a healing quality in that intercourſe, which a certain author has, with infinite propriety, termed *the medicine of life*. It is a medicine, which unluckily lies almoſt wholly out of my reach; fortune having ſeparated me from thoſe few friends whom I pretend or deſire to claim. General acquaintances, you know, I am not much inclined to cultivate; ſo that I am at preſent as much ſecluded from ſociety as if I were a *ſojourner in a ſtrange land*. Though retirement is my dear delight, yet upon ſome occaſions, I think I have too much of it; and I agree with Balzac, *que la ſolitude eſt certainement une belle choſe: mais il y a plaiſir d'avoir quelqu'un qui ſache repondre; à qui on puiſſe dire de tems en tems, que la ſolitude eſt une belle choſe.* But I muſt not forget, that as I ſometimes want company, you may as often wiſh to be alone; and that I may, perhaps, be at this inſtant breaking in upon one of thoſe hours which you deſire to enjoy without interruption. I will only detain you therefore whilſt I add, that I am, &c.

LET-

LETTER XXIII. *To* Palamedes.

March 10, 1703.

YOUR reſolution to decline thoſe overtures of acquaintance which Mezentius, it ſeems, has lately made to you, is agreeable to thoſe refined principles which have ever influenced your conduct. A man of your elegant notions of integrity will obſerve the ſame delicacy with reſpect to his companions, as Cæſar did with regard to his wife, and refuſe all commerce with perſons even but of ſuſpected honour. It would not, indeed, be doing juſtice to Mezentius, to repreſent him in that number, for though his hypocriſy has preſerved to him ſome few friends, and his immenſe wealth draws after him many followers, the world in general are by no means divided in their ſentiments concerning him.

But whilſt you can have his picture from ſo many better hands, why are you deſirous of ſeeing it by mine? It is a painful employment to contemplate human nature in its deformities; as there is nothing, perhaps, more difficult than to execute a pourtrait of the characteriſtical kind with ſtrength and ſpirit. However, ſince you have aſſigned me the taſk, I do not think myſelf at liberty to refuſe it; eſpecially as it is your intereſt to ſee him delineated in his true form.

Mezentius, with the deſigns and artifice of a Catiline, affects the integrity and patriotiſm of a Cato. Liberty, juſtice, and honour, are words which he knows perfectly well how to apply with addreſs; and having them always ready upon proper occaſions, he conceals the blackeſt purpoſes under the faireſt appearances. For void, as in truth he is, of every worthy principle, he has too much policy not to pretend to the nobleſt; well knowing that counterfeit virtues are the moſt ſucceſsful vices. It is by arts of this kind, that notwithſtanding he has ſhewn himſelf unreſtrained by the moſt ſacred engagements of ſociety, and uninfluenced by the moſt tender affections of nature, he has ſtill been able to retain ſome degree of credit in the world: for he never ſacrifices his honour to his intereſt, that he does not, in ſome leſs conſiderable, but

but more open inſtance, make a conceſſion of his intereſt to his honour; and thus, while he ſinks his character on one ſide, very artfully raiſes it on the other. Accordingly, under pretence of the moſt ſcrupulous delicacy of conſcience, he lately reſigned a poſt which he held under my lord Godolphin; when at the ſame time he was endeavouring by the moſt ſhameful artifices and evaſions, to keep a friend of mine out of the poſſeſſion of an eſtate, to which, by all the laws of honour and honeſty, he had a moſt indiſputable right.

But will you not ſuſpect that I am deſcribing a phantom of my own imagination, when I tell you after this that he has erected himſelf into a reformer of manners, and is ſo injudiciouſly officious as to draw the enquiry of the world upon his own morals by attempting to expoſe the defects of others. A man who ventures publickly to point out the blemiſhes of his contemporaries ſhould at leaſt be free from any uncommon ſtain himſelf, and have nothing remarkably dark in the complexion of his own private character. But Mezentius, not ſatisfied with being vitious, has at length determined to be ridiculous; and after having wretchedly ſquandered his youth and his patrimony in riot and diſſoluteneſs, is contemptibly miſpending his old age in meaſuring impotent ſyllables, and dealing out pointleſs abuſe. Farewel, I am, &c.

LETTER XXIV. *To* Orontes.

April 9, 1714.

THE paſſage you quote is entirely in my ſentiments. I agree both with that celebrated author and yourſelf, that our oratory is by no means in a ſtate of perfection, and, tho' it has much ſtrength and ſolidity, that it may yet be rendered far more poliſhed and affecting. The growth indeed of eloquence, even in thoſe countries where ſhe flouriſhed moſt has ever been exceedingly ſlow. Athens had been in poſſeſſion of all the other polite improvements, long before her pretenſions to the perſuaſive arts were in any degree conſiderable; as the earlieſt orator of note among the Romans did not appear ſooner than about a century before Tully.

That

That great maſter of perſuaſion, taking notice of this remarkable circumſtance, aſſigns it as an evidence of the ſuperiour difficulty of his favourite art. Poſſibly there may be ſome truth in the obſervation: but what ever the cauſe be, the fact, I believe, is undeniable. Accordingly eloquence has by no means made equal advances in our own country, with her ſiſter arts; and though we have ſeen ſome excellent poets, and a few good painters riſe up amongſt us, yet I know not whether our nation can ſupply us with a ſingle Orator of deſerved eminence. One cannot but be ſurpriz'd at this, when it is conſidered, that we have a profeſſion ſet apart for the purpoſes of perſuaſion; and which not only affords the moſt animating and intereſting topicks of rhetorick, but wherein a talent of this kind would prove the likelieſt, perhaps, of any other to obtain thoſe ambitious prizes which were thought to contribute ſo much to the ſucceſsful progreſs of ancient eloquence.

Among the principal defects of our Engliſh orators, their general diſregard of harmony has, I think, been the leaſt obſerved. It would be injuſtice indeed to deny that we have ſome performances of this kind amongſt us tolerably muſical; but it muſt be acknowledged at the ſame time, that it is more the effect of accident than deſign, and rather a proof of the power of our language, than of the part of our orators.

Dr. Tillotſon, who is frequently mentioned as having carried this ſpecies of eloquence to its higheſt perfection, ſeems to have had no ſort of notion of rhetorical numbers; and may I venture, Orontes, to add, without hazarding the imputation of an affected ſingularity, that I think no man had ever leſs pretenſions to genuine oratory, than this celebrated preacher. If any thing could raiſe a flame of eloquence in the breaſt of an orator, there is no occaſion upon which, one ſhould imagine, it would be more likely to break out, than in celebrating departed merit: yet the two ſermons which he preached upon the death of Dr. Gooch and Dr. Whitchcot are as cold and languid performances as were ever, perhaps, produced upon ſuch an animating ſubject. One cannot indeed but regret that he, who abounds with ſuch noble and generous ſentiments, ſhould want the art of ſetting

them

them off with all the advantage they deſerve; that the Sublime in morals ſhould not be attended with a ſuitable elevation of language. The truth however is, his words are frequently ill choſen, and almoſt always ill placed; his periods are both tedious and unharmonious; as his metaphors are generally mean, and often ridiculous. It were eaſy to produce numberleſs inſtances in ſupport of this aſſertion. Thus in his ſermon preached before her preſent Majeſty when ſhe was Princeſs of Denmark, he talks of *ſqueezing* a parable, *thruſting* religion *by*, *driving* a ſtrict *bargain* with God, *ſharking ſhifts*, &c. and ſpeaking of the day of judgment, he deſcribes the world as *cracking about our ears*. I cannot however but acknowledge, in juſtice to the oratorical character of this moſt valuable prelate, that there is a noble ſimplicity in ſome few of his ſermons; as his excellent diſcourſe on *ſincerity* deſerves to be mentioned with particular applauſe.

But to ſhew his deficiency in the article I am conſidering at preſent, the following ſtricture will be ſufficient, among many others that might be cited to the ſame purpoſe. "One might be apt," ſays he, "to think "at firſt view, that this parable was *overdone*, and want-"ed ſomething of a due decorum; it being hardly credi-"ble, that a man, after he had been ſo mercifully and "generouſly dealt *withal*, as upon his humble requeſt to "have ſo *huge* a debt ſo freely forgiven, ſhould, whilſt "the memory of ſo much mercy was freſh upon him, e-"ven in the very next moment, *handle* his fellow-ſer-"vant, who had made the ſame humble requeſt to him "which he had *done* to his lord, with ſo much roughneſs "and cruelty, for ſo inconſiderable a ſum."

This whole period (not to mention other objections which might juſtly be raiſed againſt it) is unmuſical throughout; but the concluding members, which ought to have been particularly flowing, are moſt miſerably looſe and disjointed. If the delicacy of Tully's ear was ſo exquiſitely refined, as not always to be ſatisfied even when he read Demoſthenes; how would it have been offended at the harſhneſs and diſſonance of ſo unharmonious a ſentence?

Nothing, perhaps, throws our eloquence at a greater diſtance

diſtance from that of the antients, than this Gothic arrangement; as thoſe wonderful effects, which ſometimes attended their elocution, were, in all probability, chiefly owing to their ſkill in muſical concords. It was by the charm of numbers united with the ſtrength of reaſon, that Tully confounded the audacious Catiline, and ſilenced the eloquent Hortenſius. It was this that deprived Curio of all power of recollection, when he roſe up to oppoſe that great maſter of enchanting rhetorick: it was this, in a word, made even Cæſar himſelf tremble; nay, what is yet more extraordinary, made Cæſar alter his determined purpoſe, and acquit the man he had reſolved to condemn.

You will not ſuſpect that I attribute too much to the power of numerous compoſition, when you recollect the inſtance which Tully produces of its wonderful effect. He informs us, you may remember, in one of his rhetorical treatiſes, that he was himſelf a witneſs of its influence as Carbo was once haranguing to the people. When that orator pronounced the following Sentence, *patris dictum ſapiens, temeritas filii comprobāvit*, it was aſtoniſhing, ſays he, to obſerve the general applauſe which followed that harmonious cloſe. A modern ear, perhaps, would not be much affected upon this occaſion; and indeed it is more than probable, that we are ignorant of the art of pronouncing that period with its genuine emphaſis and cadence. We are certain, however, that the muſick of it conſiſted in the *dichoree* with which it is terminated; for Cicero himſelf aſſures us, that if the final meaſure had been changed, and the words placed in a different order, their whole effect would have been abſolutely deſtroyed.

This art was firſt introduced among the Greeks by Thraſymachus, though ſome of the admirers of Iſocrates attributed the invention to that orator. It does not appear to have been obſerved by the Romans 'till near the times of Tully, and even then it was by no means univerſally received. The antient and leſs numerous manner of compoſition, had ſtill many admirers, who were ſuch enthuſiaſts to antiquity as to adopt her very defects. A diſpoſition of the ſame kind, may, perhaps, prevent it's being received with us; and while the archbiſhop ſhall maintain his authority as an orator, it is not to be

expected that any great advancement will be made in this ſpecies of eloquence. That ſtrength of underſtanding likewiſe, and ſolidity of reaſon which is ſo eminently our national characteriſtick, may add ſomething to the difficulty of reconciling us to a ſtudy of this kind; as at firſt glance it may ſeem to lead an orator from his grand and principal aim, and tempt him to make a ſacrifice of ſenſe to ſound. It muſt be acknowledged indeed, that in the times which ſucceeded the diſſolution of the Roman republic, this art was ſo perverted from its true end as to become the ſingle ſtudy of their enervated orators. Pliny the younger often complains of this contemptible affectation; and the polite author of that elegant dialogue which, with very little probability, is attributed either to Tacitus or Quinctilian, aſſures us it was the ridiculous boaſt of certain orators in the time of the declenſion of genuine eloquence, that their harangues were capable of being ſet to muſick, and ſung upon the ſtage. But it muſt be remembered, that the true end of this art I am recommending, is to aid, not to ſuperſede reaſon; that it is ſo far from being neceſſarily effeminate, that it not only adds grace but ſtrength to the powers of perſuaſion. For this purpoſe Tully and Quinctilian, thoſe great maſters of numerous compoſition, have laid it down as a fixed and invariable rule, that it muſt never appear the effect of labour in the orator; that the tuneful flow of his periods muſt always ſeem the caſual reſult of their diſpoſition; and that it is the higheſt offence againſt the art to weaken the expreſſion, in order to give a more muſical tone to the cadence. In ſhort, that no unmeaning words are to be thrown in merely to fill up the requiſite meaſure, but that they muſt ſtill riſe in ſenſe as they improve in ſound. I am, *&c.*

LETTER XXV. *To* Cleora.

THOUGH it was not poſſible for me to celebrate with you, as uſual, that happy anniverſary which we have ſo many reaſons to commemorate; yet I could ot ſuffer ſo joyful a feſtival to paſs by me without a n ouſand tender reflections. I took pleaſure in tracing thck that ſtream to its riſe, which has coloured all my

ſucceeding

ſucceeding days with happineſs; as my Cleora, perhaps, was at that very inſtant, running over in her own mind, thoſe many moments of calm ſatisfaction which ſhe has derived from the ſame ſource.

My heart was ſo entirely poſſeſſed with the ſentiments which this occaſion ſuggeſted, that I found myſelf raiſed into a ſort of poetical enthuſiaſm; and I could not forbear expreſſing in verſe, what I have often ſaid in proſe of the dear author of my moſt valuable enjoyments. As I imagined Teraminta would by this time be with you, I had a view to her harpſichord in the compoſition; and I deſire you would let her know I hope ſhe will ſhew me at my return, to what advantage the moſt ordinary numbers will appear when judiciouſly accompanied with a fine voice and inſtrument.

I muſt not forget to tell you, it was in your favourite grove, which we have ſo often traverſed together, that I indulged myſelf in theſe pleaſing reveries; as it was not, you are to ſuppoſe, without having firſt invoked the Genius of the place, and called upon the Muſes in due form, that I broke out into the following rhapſody.

ODE for MUSIC.

AIR I.

Thrice has the circling earth, ſwift-pacing, run,
And thrice again, around the Sun,
Since firſt the white-rob'd prieſt with ſacred band,
Sweet union! join'd us hand in hand.

CHORUS.

All Heav'n and ev'ry friendly pow'r
Approv'd the vow, and bleſs'd the hour.

RECITATIVE.

What tho' in ſilence ſacred Hymen trod,
Nor lyre proclaim'd, nor garland crown'd the god:
What tho' nor feaſt nor revel dance was there,
(Vain pomp of joy, the happy well may ſpare!)
Yet love unfeign'd and conſcious honour led
The ſpotleſs virgin to the bridal bed,
Rich tho' deſpoil'd *of all her little ſtore:*
For who ſhall ſeize *fair virtue's better dow'r?*

AIR II.

Bleſt with ſenſe, with temper bleſt,
Wiſdom o'er thy lips preſides;
Virtue guards thy gen'rous breaſt,
Kindneſs all thy actions guides.

AIR III.

Ev'ry home felt bliſs is mine,
Ev'ry matron-grace is thine;
Chaſte deportment, artleſs mien,
Converſe ſweet, and heart ſerene.
Sinks my ſoul with gloomy pain?
See ſhe ſmiles!—'tis joy again:
Swells a paſſion in my breaſt?
Hark ſhe ſpeaks!---and all is reſt.

Oft as clouds my paths o'erſpread
(Doubtful where my ſteps ſhould tread)
She with judgment's ſteddy ray
Marks and ſmooths the better way.

CHORUS.

Chief amongſt ten thouſand ſhe,
Worthy, ſacred Hymen! thee.

While ſuch are the ſentiments which I entertain of my Cleora, can I find my ſelf obliged to be thus diſtant from her, without the higheſt regret? The truth, believe me, is, though both the company and the ſcene wherein I am engaged, are extremely agreeable, yet I find a vacancy in my happineſs, which none but you can fill up. Surely thoſe who have recommended theſe little ſeparations as neceſſary to revive the languor of the married ſtate, have ill underſtood its moſt refined gratifications: there is no ſatiety in the mutual exchange of tender offices.

There ſeems to have been a time, when a happineſs of this kind was conſidered as the higheſt glory, as well as the ſupreme bleſſing of human life. I remember when I was in Italy to have ſeen ſeveral conjugal inſcriptions upon the ſepulchral monuments of antient Rome, which, inſtead of running out into a pompous panegyric upon the virtues of the deceaſed, mentioned ſingly, as the moſt ſignificant of encomiums, how many years the parties had

lived

lived together in full and uninterrupted harmony. The Romans, indeed, in this as in many other inſtances, afford the moſt remarkable examples; and it is an obſervation of one of their writers, that, notwithſtanding divorces might very eaſily be obtained among them, their republick had ſubſiſted many centuries before there was a ſingle inſtance of that privilege ever having been exerted. Thus, my Cleora, you ſee, however unfaſhionable I may appear in the preſent generation, I might have been kept in countenance in a former; and by thoſe too, who had as much true gallantry and good ſenſe as one uſually meets with in this.---But affections which are founded in truth and nature ſtand not in need of any precedent to ſupport them; and I eſteem it my honour no leſs than my happineſs, that I am, &c.

LETTER XXVI. *To* Palemon.

May 5, 1726.

WHilſt you are engaged in turning over the records of paſt ages, and tracing our conſtitution from its riſe through all its ſeveral periods; I ſometimes amuſe myſelf with reviewing certain annals of an humbler kind, and conſidering the various turns and revolutions that have happened in the ſentiments and affections of thoſe with whom I have been moſt connected. A hiſtory of this ſort is not indeed ſo ſtriking as that which exhibits kings and heroes to our view; but may it not be contemplated, Palemon, with more private advantage?

Methinks we ſhould ſcarce be ſo imbitter'd againſt thoſe who differ from us in principle or practice, were we oftener to reflect how frequently we have varied from ourſelves in both thoſe articles. It was but yeſterday that Lucius, whom I once knew a very zealous advocate for the moſt controverted points of faith, was arguing with equal warmth and vehemence on the principles of Deiſm; as Bathillus, who ſet out in the world a cool infidel, has lately drawn up one of the moſt plauſible defences of the myſtick devotees that, perhaps, was ever written. The truth is, a man muſt either have paſſed his whole life without reflecting, or his thoughts muſt have run in a very limited channel, who has not often experienced many remarkable revolutions of mind.

The ſame kind of inconſtancy is obſervable in our purſuits of happineſs as well as truth: thus our friend Curio, whom we both remember in the former part of his life, enamoured of every fair face he met, and enjoying every woman he could purchaſe, has at laſt collected this diffuſive flame into a ſingle point, and could not be tempted to commit an infidelity to his marriage vow, tho' a form as beautiful as the Venus of Apelles was to court his embrace: whilſt Apemanthes, on the other hand, who was the moſt ſober and domeſtick man I ever knew till he loſt his wife, commenced a rake at five and forty, and is now for ever in a tavern or a ſtew.

Who knows, Palemon, whether even this humour of moralizing, which, as you often tell me, ſo ſtrongly marks my character, may not wear out in time, and be ſucceeded by a brighter and more lively vein? Who knows, but I may court again the miſtreſs I have forſaken, and die at laſt in the arms of ambition? Cleora, at leaſt, who frequently rallies me upon that fever of my youth, aſſures me I am only in the intermiſſion of a fit, which will certainly return. But though there may be ſome excuſe, perhaps, in exchanging our follies or our errors, there can be none in reſuming thoſe we have once happily quitted: for ſurely he muſt be a very injudicious ſportſman, who can be tempted to beat over thoſe fields again, which have ever diſappointed him of his game. Farewel. I am, &c.

LETTER XXVII. *To* Hortenſius.

May 8, 1726.

TO be able to ſuppreſs my acknowledgments of the pleaſure I received from your approbation, were to ſhew that I do not deſerve it: for is it poſſible to value the praiſe of the judicious as one ought, and yet be ſilent under its influence? I can with ſtrict truth ſay of you, what a Greek poet did of Plato, who reading his performance to a circle where that great philoſopher was preſent, and finding himſelf deſerted at length by all the reſt of the company cried out, "I will proceed never-"theleſs, for Plato is himſelf an audience."

True fame, indeed, is no more in the gift than in the poſſeſſion

poſſeſſion of numbers, as it is only in the diſpoſal of the wiſe and the impartial. But if both thoſe qualifications muſt concur to give validity to a vote of this kind, how little reaſon has an author to be either depreſſed or elated by general cenſure or applauſe!

The triumphs of genius are not like thoſe of antient heroiſm, where the meaneſt captive made a part of the pomp, as well as the nobleſt. It is not the multitude but the dignity of thoſe that compoſe her followers, that can add any thing to her real glory; and a ſingle attendant may often render her more truly illuſtrious, than a whole train of common admirers. I am ſure at leaſt, I have no ambition of drawing after me vulgar acclamations; and whilſt I have the happineſs to enjoy your applauſe, I ſhall always conſider myſelf in poſſeſſion of the trueſt fame. Adieu. I am, &c.

LETTER XXVIII. *To* Euphronius.

I AM much inclined to join with you in thinking, that the Romans had no peculiar word in their language, which anſwers preciſely to what we call *good-ſenſe* in ours. For though *prudentia* indeed ſeems frequently uſed by their beſt writers to expreſs that idea, yet it is not confined to that ſingle meaning, but is often applied by them to ſignify *ſkill* in any particular ſcience. But good-ſenſe is ſomething very diſtinct from knowledge; and it is an inſtance of the poverty of the Latin language, that ſhe is obliged to uſe the ſame word as a mark for two ſuch different ideas.

Were I to explain what I underſtand by good-ſenſe, I ſhould call it right reaſon; but right reaſon that ariſes, not from formal and logical deductions, but from a ſort of intuitive faculty of the ſoul, which diſtinguiſhes by immediate perception; a kind of innate ſagacity, that in many of its properties ſeems very much to reſemble inſtinct. It would be improper therefore to ſay, that Sir Iſaac Newton ſhewed his good-ſenſe, by thoſe amazing diſcoveries which he made in natural philoſophy: the operations of this gift of heaven are rather inſtantaneous, than the reſult of any tedious proceſs. Like Diomed after Minerva had endued him with the power of diſcern-

ing gods from mortals, the man of good ſenſe diſcovers *at once* the truth of thoſe objects he is moſt concerned to diſtinguiſh; and conducts himſelf with ſuitable caution and ſecurity.

It is for this reaſon, poſſibly, that this quality of the mind is not ſo often found united with learning as one could wiſh: for good ſenſe being accuſtomed to receive her diſcoveries without labour or ſtudy, ſhe cannot ſo eaſily wait for thoſe truths, which being placed at a diſtance, and lying concealed under numberleſs covers, require much pains and application to unfold.

But though good-ſenſe is not in the number, nor always, it muſt be owned, in the company of the ſciences; yet is it (as the moſt ſenſible of poets has juſtly obſerved)

——— *fairly worth the ſeven.*

Rectitude of underſtanding is indeed the moſt uſeful as well as the moſt noble of human endowments, as it is the ſovereign guide and director in every branch of civil and ſocial intercourſe.

Upon whatever occaſion this enlightening faculty is exerted, it is always ſure to act with diſtinguiſhed eminence; but its chief and peculiar province ſeems to lie in the commerce of the world. Accordingly we may obſerve, that thoſe who have converſed more with men than with books, whoſe wiſdom is derived rather from experience than contemplation, generally poſſeſs this happy talent with ſuperiour perfection: for good ſenſe, though it cannot be acquired, may be improved; and the world, I believe, will ever be found to afford the moſt kindly ſoil for its cultivation.

I know not whether true good-ſenſe is not a more uncommon quality even than true wit; as there is nothing, perhaps, more extraordinary than to meet with a perſon whoſe intire conduct and notions are under the direction of this ſupreme guide. The ſingle inſtance at leaſt which I could produce of its acting ſteddily and invariably throughout the whole of a character, is that which Euphronius, I am ſure, would not allow me to mention: at the ſame time, perhaps, I am rendering my own pretenſions of this kind extremely queſtionable, when I thus venture to throw before you my ſentiments upon a ſubject, of which you are univerſally acknowledged ſo perfect a maſter. I am, &c.

LET-

LETTER XXIX. *To* Phidippus.

Oct. 11. 1718.

I Am by no means ſurprized that the interview you have lately had with Cleanthes has given you a much lower opinion of his abilities, than what you had before conceived: and ſince it has raiſed your curioſity to know my ſentiments of his character; you ſhall have them with all that freedom you may juſtly expect.

I have always then conſidered Cleanthes as poſſeſſed of the moſt extraordinary talents: but his talents are of a kind, which can only be exerted upon uncommon occaſions. They are formed for the greateſt depths of buſineſs and affairs; but abſolutely out of all ſize for the ſhallows of ordinary life. In circumſtances that require the moſt profound reaſonings, in incidents that demand the moſt penetrating politicks; there Cleanthes would ſhine with ſupreme luſtre. But view him in any ſituation inferiour to theſe; place him where he cannot raiſe admiration, and he will moſt probably ſink into contempt. Cleanthes, in ſhort, wants nothing but the addition of certain minute accompliſhments, to render him a finiſhed character: but being wholly deſtitute of thoſe little talents which are neceſſary to render a man uſeful or agreeable in the daily commerce of the world, thoſe great abilities which he poſſeſſes, lie unobſerved or neglected.

He often, indeed, gives one occaſion to reflect how neceſſary it is to be maſter of a ſort of under qualities, in order to ſet off and recommend thoſe of a ſuperiour nature. To know how to deſcend with grace and eaſe into ordinary occaſions, and to fall in with the leſs important parties and purpoſes of mankind, is an art of more general influence, perhaps, than is uſually imagined.

If I were to form therefore a youth for the world, I ſhould certainly endeavour to cultivate in him theſe ſecondary qualifications; and train him up to an addreſs in thoſe lower arts, which render a man agreeable in converſation, or uſeful to the innocent pleaſures and accommodations of life. A general ſkill and taſte of this kind with moderate abilities will in moſt inſtances, I believe, prove more ſucceſsful in the world, than a much higher degree of capacity without them. I am, &c.

LETTER XXX. *To* Orontes.

July 2, 1721.

YOUR letter found me juſt upon my return from an excurſion into Berkſhire, where I had been paying a viſit to a friend, who is drinking the waters at Sunning-hill. In one of my morning rides over that delightful country, I accidentally paſſed through a little village, which afforded me much agreeable meditation; as in times to come, perhaps, it will be viſited by the lovers of the polite arts, with as much veneration as Virgil's tomb, or any other celebrated ſpot of antiquity. The place I mean is Binfield, where the poet to whom I am indebted (in common with every reader of taſte) for ſo much exquiſite entertainment, ſpent the earlieſt part of his youth. I will not ſcruple to confeſs that I looked upon the ſcene where he planned ſome of thoſe beautiful performances which firſt recommended him to the notice of the world, with a degree of enthuſiaſm; and could not but conſider the ground as ſacred that was impreſt with the footſteps of a genius that undoubtedly does the higheſt honour to our age and nation.

The ſituation of mind in which I found myſelf upon this occaſion, ſuggeſted to my remembrance a paſſage in Tully, which I thought I never ſo thoroughly entered into the ſpirit of before. That noble author, in one of his philoſophical converſation-pieces, introduces his friend Atticus as obſerving the pleaſing effect which ſcenes of this nature are wont to have upon one's mind: *Movemur enim* (ſays that polite Roman) *neſcio quo pacto locis ipſis, in quibus eorum quos diligimus aut admiramur adſunt veſtigia. Me quidem ipſæ illæ noſtræ Athenæ, non tam operibus magnificis exquiſitiſque antiquorum artibus delectant, quam recordatione ſummorum virorum, ubi quiſque habitare, ubi ſedere, ubi diſputare ſit ſolitus.*

Thus, you ſee, I could defend myſelf by an example of great authority, were I in danger upon this occaſion of being ridiculed as a romantick viſionary. But I am too well acquainted with the refined ſentiments of Orontes, to be under any apprehenſion he will condemn the impreſſions I have here acknowledged. On the contrary, I have often heard you mention with approbation a circum-

ſtance

ſtance of this kind which is related of Silius Italicus. The annual ceremonies which that poet performed at Virgil's ſepulchre, gave you a more favourable opinion of his taſte, you confeſſed, than any thing in his works was able to raiſe.

It is certain that ſome of the greateſt names of antiquity have diſtinguiſhed themſelves by the high reverence they ſhewed to the poetical character. Scipio, you may remember, deſired to be laid in the ſame tomb with Ennius; and I am inclined to pardon that ſucceſsful madman Alexander, many of his extravagancies, for that generous regard he paid to the memory of Pindar, at the ſacking of Thebes.

There ſeems, indeed, to be ſomething in poetry, that raiſes the poſſeſſors of that very ſingular talent, far higher in the eſtimation of the world in general, than thoſe who excel in any other of the refined arts. And accordingly we find that poets have been diſtinguiſhed by antiquity with the moſt remarkable honours. Thus Homer, we are told, was deified at Smyrna; as the citizens of Mytelene ſtamped the image of Sappho upon their publick coin: Anacreon received a ſolemn invitation to ſpend his days at Athens, and Hipparchus, the ſon of Piſiſtratus, fitted out a ſplendid veſſel in order to tranſport him thither: and when Virgil came into the threatre at Rome, the whole audience roſe up and ſaluted him with the ſame reſpect as they would have paid to Auguſtus himſelf.

Painting, one ſhould imagine, has the faireſt pretenſions of rivalling her ſiſter-art in the number of admirers; and yet, where Apelles is mentioned once, Homer is celebrated a thouſand times. Nor can this be accounted for by urging that the works of the latter are ſtill extant, while thoſe of the former have periſhed long ſince: for is not Milton's Paradiſe loſt more univerſally eſteemed, than Raphael's cartoons?

The truth, I imagine, is, there are more who are natural judges of the harmony of numbers, than of the grace of proportions. One meets with but few who have not, in ſome degree at leaſt, a tolerable ear; but a judicious eye is a far more uncommon poſſeſſion. For as words are the univerſal mediums which all men employ in order to convey their ſentiments to each other; it

ſeems a juſt conſequence that they ſhould be more generally formed for reliſhing and judging of performances in that way: whereas the art of conveying ideas by means of lines and colours, lies more out of the road of common uſe, and is therefore leſs adapted to the taſte of the general run of mankind.

I hazard this obſervation, in the hopes of drawing from you your ſentiments upon a ſubject, in which no man is more qualified to decide; as indeed it is to the converſation of Orontes that I am indebted for the diſcovery of many refined delicacies in the imitative arts, which, without his judicious aſſiſtance, would have lain concealed to me with other common obſervers. Adieu. I am, &c.

LETTER XXXI. *To* Cleora.

Sept. 1, 1719.

I Look upon every day wherein I have not ſome communication with my Cleora, as a day loſt; and I take up my pen every afternoon to write to you, as regularly as I drink my tea, or perform any the like important article of my life.

I frequently bleſs the happy art that affords me a means of conveying myſelf to you at this diſtance, and by an eaſy kind of magic, thus tranſports me to your parlour at a time when I could not gain admittance by any other method. Of all people in the world indeed, none are more obliged to this paper-commerce than friends and lovers. It is by this they elude in ſome degree the malevolence of fate, and can enjoy an intercourſe with each other though the Alps themſelves ſhould riſe up between them. Even this imaginary participation of your ſociety is far more pleaſing to me, than the real enjoyment of any other converſation the whole world could ſupply. The truth is, I have loſt all reliſh for any but yours; and if I were invited to an aſſembly of all the wits of the Auguſtan age, or all the heroes that Plutarch has celebrated, I ſhould neither have ſpirits nor curioſity to be of the party. Yet with all this indolence or indifference about me, I would take a voyage as far as the pole to ſup with Cleora on a lettuce, or only to hold the bowl while

while ſhe mixed the ſyllabub. Such happy evenings I once knew: ah Cleora! will they never return? Adieu.

LETTER XXXII. *To* Euphronius.

Aug. 8, 1711.

I Know not in what diſpoſition of mind this letter may find you; but I am ſure you will not preſerve your uſual chearfulneſs of temper when I tell you, that poor Hydaſpes died laſt night.

I will not at this time attempt to offer that conſolation to you, of which I ſtand in ſo much need myſelf. But may it not ſomething abate the anxiety of our mutual grief, to reflect, that however conſiderable our own loſs is, yet with reſpect to himſelf, it ſcarce deſerves to be lamented that he arrived ſo much earlier at the grave than his years and health ſeemed to promiſe. For who, my friend, that has any experience of the world, would wiſh to extend his duration to old age? what indeed is length of days but to ſurvive all one's enjoyments, and, perhaps, to ſurvive even one's very ſelf! I have ſomewhere met with an ancient inſcription founded upon this ſentiment, which infinitely pleaſed me. It was fixed upon a bath, and contained an imprecation in the following terms, againſt any one who ſhould attempt to remove the building:

QVISQVIS. HOC. SVSTVLERIT.
AVT. IVSSERIT. VLTIMVS.
SVORVM. MORIATVR.

The thought is conceived with great delicacy and juſtneſs; as there cannot, perhaps, be a ſharper calamity to a generous mind, than to ſee itſelf ſtand ſingle amidſt the ruins of whatever rendered the world moſt deſirable.

Inſtances of the ſort I am lamenting, while the impreſſions remain freſh upon the mind, are ſufficient to damp the gayeſt hopes and chill the warmeſt ambition. When one ſees a perſon in the full bloom of life, thus deſtroyed by one ſingle blaſt, one cannot but conſider all the diſtant ſchemes of mankind as the higheſt folly.

It is amazing indeed that a creature ſuch as man, with ſo many memorials around him of the ſhortneſs of his duration, and who cannot enſure to himſelf even the

next

next moment, ſhould yet plan deſigns which run far into futurity. The buſineſs however of life muſt be carried on, and it is neceſſary for the purpoſes of human affairs, that mankind ſhould reſolutely act upon very precarious contingencies. Too much reflexion, therefore, is as inconſiſtent with the appointed meaſures of our ſtation, as too little; and there cannot be a leſs deſirable turn of mind, than one that is influenced by an over-refined philoſophy. At leaſt it is by conſiderations of this ſort, that I endeavour to call off my thoughts from purſuing too earneſtly thoſe reaſonings, which the occaſion of this letter is apt to ſuggeſt. This uſe, however, one may juſtly make of the preſent accident, that whilſt it contracts the circle of friendſhip, it ſhould render it ſo much the more valuable to us who yet walk within its limits. Adieu. I am, &c.

LETTER XXXIII. *To* Clytander.

Feb. 6, 1709.

YOU will give me up, I doubt, as a correſpondent of incorrigible indolence, and tell me in the language of Horace,

Sic rarò ſcribis, ut toto non quater anno.
Membranam poſcas.——

You will reprove me, perhaps, for giving ſo little encouragement to the paper-manufacture, and remind me that I ought to write oftner, if not for the ſake of my friend, at leaſt to promote the trade of my country.

I can draw up, you ſee, a charge againſt myſelf with great eaſe; but the difficulty of the taſk would be how to anſwer it. There indeed I muſt honeſtly acknowledge myſelf at a loſs: and *Truth* having not one word to plead in my behalf, I muſt apply to *Fiction*, that ready advocate of guilt, to ſupport my cauſe. Imagine therefore that ſome evil demon had carried away my pen, or ſome envious enchantreſs had bound my hands. Imagine that I have been deceived by ſome airy viſion, and fancied I had wrote letters and received anſwers which in reality I never did. Imagine in ſhort whatever you pleaſe, but that I am in any degree leſs than the higheſt your &c.

LET-

LETTER XXXIV. *To* Philotes.

Aug. 3, 1725.

LET it not be any diſcouragement to you, Philotes, that you have hitherto received but little ſatisfaction from thoſe noble ſpeculations wherein you are employed. "Truth (to uſe the expreſſion of the excellent "Mr. Wollaſton) is the offſpring of unbroken medita-"tions and of thoughts often reviſed and corrected." It requires indeed great patience and reſolution to diſſipate that cloud of darkneſs which ſurrounds her; or (if you will allow me to go to an old philoſopher for my alluſion) to draw her from that profound well in which ſhe lies concealed.

There is, however, ſuch a general connection in the operations of nature, that the diſcovery even of a ſingle truth, opens the way to numberleſs others; and when once the mind has hit upon a right ſcent, ſhe cannot wholly purſue her enquiries in vain:

Canes ut montivagæ perſæpe ferai
Naribus inveniunt intectas frunde quietes,
Cum ſemel inſtiterunt veſtigia certa viai:
Sic aliud ex alio per te tute ipſe videre
——in rebus poteris, cæcaſque latebras
Inſinuare omnes, et verum protrahere inde. LUCRET.

It muſt be owned nevertheleſs, that, after having exerted all our ſagacity and induſtry, we ſhall ſcarce arrive at certainty in many ſpeculative truths. Providence does not ſeem to have intended that we ſhould ever be in poſſeſſion of *demonſtrative* knowledge, beyond a very limited compaſs; though at the ſame time it cannot be ſuppoſed, without the higheſt injuſtice to the benevolent author of our natures, that he has left any *neceſſary* truths without evident notes of diſtinction. But while the powers of the mind are thus limited in their extent, and greatly fallible likewiſe in their operations, is it not amazing, Philotes, that mankind ſhould inſult each other for difference in opinion, and treat every notion that oppoſes their own with obliquy and contempt? Is it not amazing that a creature with talents ſo precarious and circumſcribed, ſhould uſurp that confidence which can only belong to much ſuperior beings, and claim a deference which is due

to perfection alone? Surely the greateſt arrogance that ever entered into the human heart, is that which not only pretends to be poſitive itſelf in points wherein the beſt and the wiſeſt have diſagreed, but looks down with all the inſolent ſuperiority of contemptuous pity on thoſe, whoſe impartial reaſonings have led them into oppoſite concluſions.

There is nothing, perhaps, more evident than that our intellectual faculties are not formed by one general ſtandard; and conſequently that diverſity of opinion is of the very eſſence of our natures. It ſeems probable that this diſparity extends even to our ſenſitive powers; and though we agree indeed in giving the ſame names to certain viſible appearances, as whiteneſs, for inſtance, to ſnow; yet it is by no means demonſtration, that the particular body which affects us with that ſenſation, raiſes the ſame preciſe idea in any two perſons who ſhall happen to contemplate it together. Thus I have often heard you mention your youngeſt daughter as being the exact counter-part of her mother: now ſhe does not appear to me to reſemble her in any ſingle feature. To what can this diſagreement in our judgments be owing, but to a difference in the ſtructure of our organs of ſight? yet as juſtly, Philotes, might you diſclaim me for your friend, and look upon me with contempt for not diſcovering a ſimilitude which appears ſo evident to your eyes; as any man can abuſe or deſpiſe another for not apprehending the force of that argument which carries conviction to his own underſtanding.

Happy had it been for the peace of the world, if our maintainers of ſyſtems either in religion or politicks, had conducted their ſeveral debates with the full impreſſion of this truth upon their minds. Genuine philoſophy is ever, indeed, the leaſt dogmatical; and I am always inclined to ſuſpect the force of that argument which is obtruded with arrogance and ſufficiency.

I am wonderfully pleaſed with a paſſage I met with the other day in the preface to Mr. Boyle's philoſophical eſſays, and would recommend that cautious ſpirit by which he profeſſes to have conducted himſelf in his phyſical reſearches, as worthy the imitation of enquirers after truth of every kind.

" Perhaps you will wonder, *ſays he*, that in almoſt " every one of the following eſſays, I ſhould uſe ſo often, " *perhaps*, *it ſeems*, *'tis not improbable*, as argue a diffi- " dence of the truth of the opinions I incline to; and " that I ſhould be ſo ſhy of laying down principles, and " ſometimes of ſo much as venturing at explications. But " I muſt freely confeſs, that having met with many things " of which I could give myſelf no one probable cauſe, " and ſome things of which ſeveral cauſes may be aſſigned " ſo differing, as not to agree in any thing, unleſs in " their being all of them probable enough; I have of- " ten found ſuch difficulties in ſearching into the cauſes " and manner of things, and I am ſo ſenſible of my own " diſability to ſurmount thoſe difficulties, that I dare " ſpeak confidently and poſitively of very few things, ex- " cept matter of fact. And when I venture to deliver " any thing by way of opinion, I ſhould, if it were not " for mere ſhame, ſpeak yet more diffidently than I have " been wont to do.-- Nor have my thoughts been alto- " gether idle---in forming notions and attempting to de- " viſe hypotheſes. But I have hitherto (though not al- " ways, yet not unfrequently) found that what pleaſed " me for a while, was ſoon after diſgraced by ſome far- " ther or new experiment. And indeed, I have the leſs " envied many (for I ſay not *all*) of thoſe writers who " have taken upon them to deliver the cauſes of things, " and explicate the myſteries of nature, ſince I have had " opportunity to obſerve how many of their doctrines, " after having been for a while applauded and even ad- " mired, have afterwards been confuted by ſome new " phænomenon in nature, which was either unknown to " ſuch writers, or not ſufficiently conſidered by them."

If poſitiveneſs could become any man in any point of mere ſpeculation, it muſt have been this truly noble philoſopher when he was delivering the reſult of his ſtudies in a ſcience, wherein, by the united confeſſion of the whole world, he ſo eminently excelled. But he had too much generoſity to preſcribe his own notions as a meaſure to the judgment of others, and too much good ſenſe to aſſert them with heat or confidence.

Whoever, Philotes, purſues his ſpeculations with this humble unarrogating temper of mind, and with the beſt

exertion

exertion of thoſe faculties which Providence has aſſigned him, though he ſhould not find the conviction, never, ſurely, can fail of the reward of truth. I am, &c.

LETTER XXXV. *To* Palemon.

May 28, 1729.

I WRITE this while Cleora is angling by my ſide, under the ſhade of a ſpreading elm that hangs over the banks of our river. A nightingale, more harmonious even than Strada's, is ſerenading us from a hawthorn buſh which ſmiles with all the gaiety of youth and beauty; while

——— gentle gales,
Fanning their odorif'rous wings, diſpenſe
Nati-ve perfumes, and whiſper whence they ſtole
Thoſe balmy ſpoils—— MILTON.

Whilſt I am thus enjoying the innocent luxury of this vernal delight, I look back upon thoſe ſcenes of turbulence wherein I was once engaged, with more than ordinary diſtate; and deſpiſe my ſelf for ever having entertained ſo mean a thought as to be rich and great. One of our monarchs uſed to ſay, "that he looked upon thoſe "to be the happieſt men in the nation, whoſe fortune "had placed them in the country, above a high-conſta-"ble and below the trouble of a juſtice of peace." It is in a mediocrity of this happy kind that I here paſs my life: with a fortune far above the neceſſity of engaging in the drudgery of buſineſs; and with deſires much too humble to have any reliſh for the ſplendid baits of ambition.

You muſt not, however, imagine that I affect the ſtoick, or pretend to have eradicated all my paſſions: the ſum of my philoſophy amounts to no more than to cheriſh none but ſuch as I may eaſily and innocently gratify, and to baniſh all the reſt as ſo many bold intruders upon my repoſe. I endeavour to practiſe the maxim of a *French* poet, by conſidering every thing that is not within my poſſeſſion as not worth having:

——— pour m'aſſûrer le ſeul bien
Que l'on doit eſtimer au monde,
Tout ce que je n'ai pas, je le compte pour rien.

Is it not poſſible, Palemon, to reconcile you to theſe unaſpiring ſentiments, and to lower your flight to the humble level of genuine happineſs? Let me at laſt prevail with you to ſpare a day or two from the *certamina divitiarum* (as Horace I think calls them) from thoſe ſplendid conteſts in which you are engaged, juſt to take a view of the ſort of life we lead in the country. If there is any thing wanting to complete the happineſs I here find, it is that you are ſo ſeldom a witneſs to it. Adieu. I am, &c.

LETTER XXXVI. *To* Euphronius.

July 3, 1714.

THE beauties of ſtyle ſeem to be generally conſidered as below the attention both of an author and a reader. I know not therefore, whether I may venture to acknowledge, that among the numberleſs graces of your late performance, I particularly admired that ſtrength and elegance with which you have enforced and adorned the nobleſt ſentiments.

There was a time however (and it was a period of the trueſt refinements) when an excellence of this kind was eſteemed in the number of the politeſt accompliſhments; as it was the ambition of ſome of the greateſt names of antiquity, to diſtinguiſh themſelves in the improvements of their native tongue. Julius Cæſar, who was not only the greateſt hero, but the fineſt gentleman that ever, perhaps, appeared in the world, was deſirous of adding this talent to his other moſt ſhining endowments: and we are told he ſtudied the language of his country with much application; as we are ſure he poſſeſſed it in its higheſt elelegance. What a loſs, Euphronius, is it to the literary world, that the treatiſe which he wrote upon this ſubject, is periſhed with many other valuable works of that age? But though we are deprived of the benefit of his obſervations, we are happily not without an inſtance of their effects; and his own memoirs will ever remain as the beſt and brighteſt exemplar not only of true generalſhip, but of fine writing. He publiſhed them, indeed, only as materials for the uſe of thoſe who ſhould be diſpoſed to enlarge upon that remarkable period of the Roman ſtory; yet the purity and gracefulneſs of his ſtyle were ſuch,

that

that no judicious writer durſt attempt to touch the ſubject after him.

Having produced ſo illuſtrious an inſtance in favour of an art, for which I have ventured to admire you; it would be impertinent to add a ſecond, were I to cite a leſs authority than that of the immortal Tully. This noble author, in his dialogue concerning the celebrated Roman orators, frequently mentions it as a very high encomium that they poſſeſſed the elegance of their native language; and introduces Brutus as declaring, that he ſhould prefer the honour of being eſteemed the great maſter and improver of the Roman eloquence, even to the glory of many triumphs.

But to add reaſon to precedent, and to view this art in its uſe as well as its dignity; will it not be allowed of ſome importance when it is conſidered, that eloquence is one of the moſt conſiderable auxiliaries of truth? Nothing indeed contributes more to ſubdue the mind to the force of reaſon, than her being ſupported by the powerful aſſiſtance of maſculine and vigorous oratory. As on the contrary the moſt legitimate arguments may be diſappointed of that ſucceſs they deſerve, by being attended with a ſpiritleſs and enfeebled expreſſion. Accordingly, the moſt elegant of writers, the inimitable Mr. Addiſon obſerves in one of his late eſſays, that, "there is as "much difference between comprehending a thought "cloathed in Cicero's language and that of an ordinary "writer, as between ſeeing an object by the light of a "taper or the light of the ſun."

It is ſurely then a very ſtrange conceit of the celebrated Malbranche, who ſeems to think the pleaſure which ariſes from peruſing a well written piece, is of the criminal kind, and has its ſource in the weakneſs and effeminancy of the human heart. A man muſt have a very uncommon ſeverity of temper indeed, who can find any thing to condemn in adding charms to truth, and gaining the heart by captivating the ear; in uniting roſes with the thorns of ſcience, and joining pleaſure with inſtruction.

The truth is, the mind is delighted with a fine ſtyle, upon the ſame principle that it prefers regularity to confuſion, and beauty to deformity. A taſte of this ſort is

indeed

indeed ſo far from being a mark of any depravity of our nature, that I ſhould rather conſider it as an evidence, in ſome degree, of the moral rectitude of its conſtitution, as it is a proof of its retaining ſome reliſh at leaſt of harmony and order.

One might be apt, indeed, to ſuſpect that certain writers amongſt us had conſidered all beauties of this ſort, in the ſame gloomy view with Malbranche: or at leaſt that they avoided every refinement in ſtyle, as unworthy a lover of truth and philoſophy. Their ſentiments are ſunk by the loweſt expreſſions, and ſeem condemned to the firſt curſe, of *creeping upon the ground all the days of their life*. Others on the contrary, miſtake pomp for dignity; and, in order to raiſe their expreſſions above vulgar language, lift them up beyond common apprehenſions, eſteeming it (one ſhould imagine) a mark of their genius, that it requires ſome ingenuity to penetrate their meaning. But how few writers, like Euphronius, know to hit that true medium which lies between thoſe diſtant extremes? How ſeldom do we meet with an author, whoſe expreſſions, like thoſe of my friend, are glowing but not glaring, whoſe metaphors are natural but not common, whoſe periods are harmonious but not poetical; in a word, whoſe ſentiments are *well ſet*, and ſhewn to the underſtanding in their trueſt and moſt advantageous luſtre. I am, &c.

LETTER XXXVII. *To* Orontes.

Aug. 5, 1716.

I Intended to have cloſed with your propoſal, and paſſed a few weeks with you at * * * but ſome unlucky affairs have intervened, which will engage me, I fear, the remaining part of this ſeaſon.

Among the amuſements which the ſcene you are in affords, I ſhould have eſteemed the converſation of Timoclea as a very principal entertainment; and as I know you are fond of ſingular characters, I recommend that lady to your acquaintance.

Timoclea was once a beauty; but ill health, and worſe fortune, have ruined thoſe charms, which time would yet have ſpared. However, what has ſpoiled her for a miſtreſs

miſtreſs, has improved her as a companion; and ſhe is far more converſible now, as ſhe has much leſs beauty, than when I uſed to ſee her once a week triumphing in the drawing-room. For as few women (whatever they may pretend) will value themſelves upon their minds, while they can gain admirers by their perſons, Timoclea never thought of charming by he wit, till ſhe had no chance of making conqueſts by her beauty. She has ſeen a good deal of the world, and of the beſt company in it; as it is from thence ſhe has derived whatever knowledge ſhe poſſeſſes. You cannot, indeed, flatter her more, than by ſeeming to conſider her as fond of reading and retirement. But the truth is, nature formed her for the joys of ſociety, and ſhe is never ſo thoroughly pleaſed as when ſhe has a circle round her.

It is upon thoſe occaſions ſhe appears to full advantage; as I never knew any perſon who was endued with the talents for converſation to an higher degree. If I were diſpoſed to write the characters of the age, Timoclea is the firſt perſon in the world to whoſe aſſiſtance I ſhould apply. She has the happieſt art of marking out the diſtinguiſhing caſt of her acquaintance, that I ever met with; and I have known her, in an afternoon's converſation, paint the manners with greater delicacy of judgment and ſtrength of colouring, than is to be found either in Theophraſtus or Bruyere.

She has an inexhauſtible fund of wit; but if I may venture to diſtinguiſh, where one knows not even how to define, I ſhould rather ſay, it is brilliant than ſtrong. This talent renders her the terrour of all her female acquaintance; yet ſhe never ſacrificed the abſent, or mortified the preſent, merely for the ſake of diſplaying the force of her ſatyr; if any feel its ſting, it is thoſe only who firſt provoke it. Still however it muſt be owned, that her reſentments are frequently without juſt foundation, and almoſt always beyond meaſure. But tho' ſhe has much warmth, ſhe has great generoſity in her temper; and if ſhe had one virtue more, her heart would have as many admirers as her underſtanding: yet with all her faults ſhe is worth your knowing.

And now having given you this general plan of the ſtrength and weakneſs of the place, I leave you to make your approaches as you ſhall ſee proper. I am, &c.

LETTER XXXVIII. *To the ſame.*

I Look upon verbal criticiſm, as it is generally exerciſed, to be no better than a ſort of learned legerdemain, by which the ſenſe or nonſenſe of a paſſage is artfully convey'd away, and ſome other introduced in its ſtead, as beſt ſuits with the purpoſe of the profound juggler. The diſſertation you recommended to my peruſal has but ſerved to confirm me in theſe ſentiments: for though I admired the ingenuity of the artiſt, I could not but greatly ſuſpect the juſtneſs of an art, which can thus preſs any author into the ſervice of any hypotheſis.

I have ſometimes amuſed myſelf with conſidering the entertainment it would afford to thoſe antients, whoſe works have had the honour to be attended by commentators, could they riſe out of their ſepulchres, and peruſe ſome of thoſe curious conjectures, that have been raiſed upon their reſpective compoſitions. Were Horace, for inſtance, to read over only a few of thoſe numberleſs reſtorers of his text, and expoſitors of his meaning, that have infeſted the republick of letters; what a fund of pleaſantry might he extract for a ſatyr on critical erudition? how many harmleſs words would he ſee cruelly baniſhed from their rightful poſſeſſions, merely becauſe they happened to diſturb ſome unmerciful philologiſt? On the other hand, he would undoubtedly ſmile at that penetrating ſagacity, which has diſcovered meanings which never entered into his thoughts, and found out concealed alluſions in his moſt plain and artleſs expreſſions.

One could not, I think, ſet the general abſurdity of critical conjectures in a ſtronger light, than by applying them to ſomething parallel in our own writers. If the Engliſh tongue ſhould ever become a dead language, and our beſt authors be raiſed into the rank of claſſick writers; much of the force and propriety of their expreſſions, eſpecially of ſuch as turned upon humour, or alluded to any manners peculiar to the age, would inevitably be loſt, or, at leaſt, would be extremely doubtful. How would it puzzle, for inſtance, future commentators to explain Swift's epigram upon our muſical conteſts? I imagine one might find them deſcanting upon that little humorous ſally of our Engliſh Rabelais in ſome ſuch manner as this:

EPIGRAM.

EPIGRAM *on the Feuds between* Handel *and* Bononcini.

Strange all this difference ſhould be
'Twixt Tweedle-dum and Tweedle-dee!

Notes *of various* Authors.

" *Tweedle dum and Tweedle dee*] I am perſuaded the " Poet gave it *Twiddle-drum* and *Twiddle-key*. To " *twiddle* ſignifies to make a certain ridiculous motion " with the fingers: what word therefore could be more " proper to expreſs this epigram-writer's contempt of the " performances of thoſe muſicians, and of the folly of his " contemporaries in running into parties upon ſo abſurd an " occaſion? The *drum* was a certain martial inſtrument " uſed in thoſe times; as the word *key* is a technical term " in muſick, importing the fundamental note which re- " gulates the whole compoſition. It means alſo thoſe little " pieces of wood which the fingers ſtrike againſt in an " organ, *&c.* in order to make the inſtrument ſound. " The alteration here propoſed is ſo *obvious* and *natural* " that I am ſurprized none of the commentators have hit " upon it before. *L. C. D.*

" *Tweedle-dum* and *Tweedle dee.*] Theſe words have " greatly embarraſs'd the criticks, who are extremely ex- " pert in finding a difficulty where there is none. Tweedle- " dum and Tweedle-dee are *moſt undoubtedly* the names " of the two muſicians: and though they are ſtyled by " different appellations in the title of this Epigram, yet " that is *no objection*, for it is well known that perſons in " thoſe times had more ſir-names than one. *S. M.* Ab- " ſurd! here is evidently an error of the preſs, for there " is not a ſingle hint in all antiquity of the family of the " *Tweedle-dums* and *Tweedle-dees*. The learned *S. M.* " therefore nodded when he undertook to explain this " paſſage. The ſenſe will be very plain if we read with " a ſmall Alteration, *Wheedle-Tom* and *Waddle THE*, " *THE* being a known contraction for Theodore, as " Tom is for Thomas. *Waddle* and *Wheedle* are like- " wiſe claſſical words. Thus Pope:

" *As when a dab-chick* waddles *thro' the copſe.* Dun. ii. 59.
" *Obliquely* waddling *to the mark in view.* Ib. ii. 150.

" And though indeed I do not recollect to have met with " the verb *to wheedle*, in any pure author, yet it is *plain*

" that

" that it was in uſe, ſince we find the participle *wheedling*
" in an antient tragedy compoſed about theſe times:
" *A laughing, toying,* wheedling, *whimp'ring ſhe*
" *Will make him amble on a goſſip's meſſage,*
" *And hold the diſtaff with a hand as patient*
" *As e'er did Hercules.* --- JANE SHORE.
" *Thomas* and *Theodore* therefore were *moſt certainly* the
" Chriſtian names of theſe two muſicians, to the contrac-
" tions of which the words *wheedle* and *waddle* are added
" as characteriſtical of the perſons and diſpoſitions of the
" men: the former implying that *Tom* was a mean ſyco-
" phant, and the latter that *THE* had an aukward and
" ridiculous gait." *F. J. Z.*

I know not, Orontes, how I ſhall eſcape your ſatyr, for venturing to be thus free with a ſcience which is ſometimes, I know, admitted into a ſhare of your meditations: yet tell me honeſtly, is not this a faithful ſpecimen of the ſpirit and talents of the *general* claſs of critic-writers? Far am I, however, from thinking irreverently of thoſe uſeful members of the republick of letters, who with modeſty and proper diffidence, have offered their aſſiſtance in throwing a light upon obſcure paſſages in antient authors. Even when this ſpirit breaks out in its higheſt pride and petulance of reformation, if it confines itſelf to claſſical enquiries, I can be contented with treating it only as an object of ridicule: but I muſt confeſs, when I find it, with an aſſured and confident air, ſupporting religious or political doctrines upon the very uncertain foundation of various readings, forced analogies, and precarious conjectures, it is not without ſome difficulty I can ſuppreſs my indignation. Farewel. I am, &c.

LETTER XXXIX. *To* Philotes.

Tunbridge, Aug. 4, 1703.

I think I promiſed you a letter from this place: yet I have nothing more material to write than that I got ſafe hither. To any other man I ſhould make an apology for troubling him with an information ſo trivial; but among true friends there is nothing indifferent, and what would ſeem of no conſequence to others, has in intercourſes of this nature its weight and value. A by-ſtander, unac-

quainted with play, may fancy, perhaps, that the counters are of no more worth than they appear; but thoſe who are engaged in the game, know they are to be conſidered at a higher rate. You ſee I draw my alluſions from the ſcene before me; a propriety which the criticks, I think, upon ſome occaſions recommend.

I have often wondered what odd whim could firſt induce the healthy to follow the ſick into places of this ſort, and lay the ſcene of their diverſions amidſt the moſt wretched part of our ſpecies: one ſhould imagine an hoſpital the laſt ſpot in the world, to which thoſe who are in purſuit of pleaſure would think of reſorting. However, ſo it is; and by this means the company here furniſh out a tragi-comedy of the moſt ſingular kind. While ſome are literally dying, others are expiring in metaphor; and in one ſcene you are preſented with the real, and in another with the fantaſtical pains of mankind. An ignorant ſpectator might be apt to ſuſpect, that each party was endeavouring to qualify itſelf for acting in the oppoſite character; for the infirm cannot labour more earneſtly to recover the ſtrength they have loſt, than the robuſt to diſſipate that which they poſſeſs. Thus the diſeaſed paſs not more anxious nights in their beds, than the healthy at the hazard-tables; and I frequently ſee a game at ombre occaſion as ſevere diſquietudes as a fit of the gout. As for myſelf, I perform a ſort of middle part in this motely drama, and am ſometimes diſpoſed to join with the invalids in envying the healthy, and ſometimes have ſpirits enough to mix with the gay in pitying the ſplenetick.

The truth is, I have found ſome benefit by the waters; but I ſhall not be ſo ſanguine as to pronounce with certainty of their effects, 'till I ſee how they enable me to paſs through the approaching winter. That ſeaſon, you know, is the time of trial with me; and if I get over the next with more eaſe than the laſt, I ſhall think myſelf obliged to celebrate the nymph of theſe ſprings, in grateful ſonnet.

But let times and ſeaſons operate as they may, there is one part of me over which they will have no power; and in all the changes of this uncertain conſtitution, my heart will ever continue fixed and firmly yours.

LET-

LETTER. XL. *To* Cleora.

Sept. 5. 1705.

SHall I own no you that I cannot repent of an offence which occaſioned ſo agreeable a reproof? A cenſure conveyed in ſuch genteel terms, charms more than corrects, and tempts rather than reforms, I am ſure at leaſt, though I ſhould regret the crime, I ſhall always admire the rebuke, and long to kiſs the hand that chaſteneth in ſo pleaſing a manner. However, I ſhall for the future ſtrictly purſue your orders, and have ſent you in this ſecond parcel no other books than what my own library ſupplied. Among theſe you will find a collection of letters: I do not recommend them to you, having never read them; nor indeed am I acquainted with their characters; but they preſented themſelves to my hands as I was tumbling over ſome others, ſo I threw them in with the reſt, and gave them a chance of adding to your amuſement. I wiſh I could meet with any thing that had even the leaſt probability of contributing to mine. But,

——forlorne of thee,
Whither ſhall I betake me, where ſubſiſt?

MILT.

Time that reconciles one to moſt things, has not been able to render your abſence in any degree leſs uneaſy to me. I may rather be ſaid to haunt the houſe in which I live, than to make one of the family. I walk in and out of the rooms like a reſtleſs ſpirit: for I never ſpeak till I am ſpoken to, and then generally anſwer, like Banco's ghoſt in Macbeth, with a deep ſigh and a nod. Thus abſtracted from every thing about me, I am yet quite ruined for a hermit, and find no more ſatisfaction in retirement, than you do in the company of that everlaſting babbler you mention.

How often do I wiſh myſelf in poſſeſſion of that famous ring you were mentioning the other day, which had the property of rendering thoſe who wore it inviſible. I would rather be maſter of this wonderful *unique*, than of the kingdom which Gyges gained by means of it; as I might then attend you, like your guardian angel, without

cenſure or obſtruction. How agreeable would it be to break out upon you, like Æneas from his cloud, where you leaſt expected me; and join again the dear companion of my fortunes, in ſpight of that relentleſs power who has raiſed ſo many cruel ſtorms to ſeparate us! But whilſt I employed this extraordinary ring to theſe and a thouſand other pleaſing purpoſes, you would have nothing to apprehend from my being inveſted with ſuch an inviſible faculty. That innocence which guards and adorns my Cleora in her moſt gay and public hours, attends her, I well know, in her moſt private and retired ones; and ſhe who always acts as under the eye of the beſt of Beings, has nothing to fear from the ſecret inſpection of any mortal. Adieu. I am, &c.

LETTER XLI. *To* Orontes.

May 6, 1715.

LET others conſider you for thoſe ample poſſeſſions you enjoy: ſuffer me to ſay, that it is your application of them alone which renders either them or you valuable in my eſtimation. Your ſplendid roofs and elegant accommodations I can view without the leaſt emotion of envy: but when I obſerve you in the full power of exerting the noble purpoſes of your exalted generoſity — it is then, I confeſs, I am apt to reflect, with ſome regret, on the humbler ſupplies of my own more limited finances. *Nihil habet* (to ſpeak of you in the ſame language that the firſt of orators addreſſed the greateſt of emperors) *fortuna tua majus, quàm ut poſſis; nec natura melius, quàm ut velis ſervare quamplurimos.* To be able to ſoften the calamities of mankind, and inſpire gladneſs into a heart oppreſſed with misfortunes, is indeed the nobleſt privilege of an enlarged fortune: but to exerciſe that privilege in all its generous refinements, is an inſtance of the moſt uncommon elegance both of temper and underſtanding.

In the ordinary diſpenſations of bounty, little addreſs is required: but when it is to be applied to thoſe of a ſuperior rank and more elevated mind, there is as much charity diſcovered in the *manner* as in the meaſure of one's benevolence. It is ſomething extremely mortifying to a well-

well-formed ſpirit, to ſee itſelf conſidered as an object of compaſſion; as it is the part of improved humanity to humour this honeſt pride in our nature, and to relieve the wants without offending the delicacy of the diſtreſſed.

I have ſeen charity (if charity it might be called) inſult with an air of pity, and wound at the ſame time that it healed. But I have ſeen too the higheſt munificence diſpenſed with the moſt refined tenderneſs, and a bounty conferred with as much addreſs as the moſt artful would employ in ſoliciting one. Suffer me, Orontes, upon this ſingle occaſion, to gratify my own inclinations in violence to yours by pointing out the particular inſtance I have in my view; and allow me, at the ſame time to join my acknowledgments, with thoſe of the unfortunate perſon I recommended to your protection, for the generous aſſiſtance you lately afforded him. I am, &c.

LETTER XLII. *To* Euphronius.

Sept. 5, 1707.

IF you received the firſt account of my loſs from other hands than mine; you muſt impute it to the dejection of mind into which that accident threw me. The blow indeed, fell with too much ſeverity, to leave me capable of recollecting myſelf enough to write to you immediately; as there cannot, perhaps, be a greater ſhock to a breaſt of any ſenſibility, than to ſee its earlieſt and moſt valuable connections irreparably broken: than to find itſelf for ever torn from the firſt and moſt endeared object of its higheſt veneration. At leaſt, the affection and eſteem I bore to that excellent parent were founded upon ſo many and ſuch uncommon motives, that his death has given me occaſion to lament not only a moſt tender father, but a moſt valuable friend.

That I can no longer enjoy the benefit of his animating example, is one among the many aggravating circumſtances of my affliction; and I often apply to myſelf, what an excellent antient has ſaid upon a ſimilar occaſion, *Vereor ne nunc negligentius vivam.* There is nothing, in truth, puts us ſo much upon our guard, as to act under the conſtant inſpection of one whoſe virtues, as well as years,

years, have rendered venerable. Never, indeed, did the dignity of goodneſs appear more irreſiſtible in any man: Yet there was ſomething at the ſame time ſo gentle in his manners, ſuch an innocency and chearfulneſs in his converſation, that he was as ſure to gain affection as to inſpire reverence.

It has been obſerved (and I think, by Mr. Cowley) "That a man in much buſineſs muſt either make himſelf "a knave, or the world will make him a fool." If there is any truth in this obſervation, it is not, however, without an exception. My father was early engaged in the great ſcenes of buſineſs, where he continued almoſt to his very laſt hour; yet he preſerved his integrity firm and unbroken, through all thoſe powerful aſſaults which he muſt neceſſarily have encountered in ſo long a courſe of action.

If it were juſtice, indeed, to his other virtues, to ſingle out any particular one as ſhining with ſuperiour luſtre to the reſt, I ſhould point to his honeſty as the brighteſt part of his character. But the truth is, the whole tenour of his conduct was one uniform exerciſe of every moral quality that can adorn and exalt human nature. To defend the injured, to relieve the indigent, to protect the diſtreſſed, was the chief end and aim of all his endeavours; and his principal motive both for engaging and perſevering in his employments was, to enable himſelf more abundantly to gratify ſo glorious an ambition.

No man had a higher reliſh of the pleaſures of retired and contemplative life; as none was more qualified to enter into thoſe calm ſcenes with greater eaſe and dignity. He had nothing to make him deſirous of flying from the reflections of his own mind, nor any paſſions which his moderate patrimony would not have been more than ſufficient to have gratified. But to live for himſelf only, was not conſiſtent with his generous and enlarged ſentiments. It was a ſpirit of benevolence that led him into the active ſcenes of the world; which upon any other principle he would either never have entered, or ſoon have renounced. And it was that godlike ſpirit which conducted and ſupported him through his uſeful progreſs, to the honour and intereſt of his family and friends, and to the benefit of

of every creature, that could poſſibly be comprehended within the extenſive circle of his beneficence.

I well know, my dear Euphronius, the high regard you pay to every character of merit in general, and the eſteem in which you held this moſt valuable man in particular. I am ſure, therefore, you would not forgive me were I to make an apology for leaving with you this private monument of my veneration for a parent, whoſe leaſt and loweſt claim to my gratitude and eſteem is, that I am indebted to him for my birth. Adieu. I am, &c.

LETTER XLIII. *To* Palamedes.

I AM particularly pleaſed with a paſſage in Homer, wherein Jupiter is repreſented as taking off his eyes, with a ſort of ſatiety, from the horrour of the field of battle, and relieving himſelf with a view of the Læſtrigons * ; a people famous, it ſeems, for their innocence and ſimplicity of manners. It is in order to practiſe the ſame kind of experiment, and give myſelf a ſhort remiſſion from that ſcene of turbulence and contention in which I am engaged, that I now turn my thoughts on you, Palamedes, whoſe temperance and moderation may well juſtify me in calling a modern Læſtrigon.

I forget which of the antients it is that recommends this method of thinking over the virtues of one's acquaintance: but I am ſure it is ſometimes neceſſary to do ſo, in order to keep one's ſelf in humour with our ſpecies, and preſerve the ſpirit of philanthropy from being intirely extinguiſhed. Thoſe who frequent the ambitious walks

* This appears to be a ſlip of our author's memory: it was not the Læſtrigons upon whom Jupiter turned his eyes, in the paſſage alluded to, but the *Hippomolgi*:

——— καθορωμιν· αιαν
——— αγαυων Ιππημολγων,
Γλακτοφαγων, αβιων τε, δικαιοτατων ανθρωπων.
Il. xiii. 4.

Then turn'd thoſe eyes ———
To where the far-fam'd Hippomolgian ſtrays,
Renown'd for juſtice and for length of days;
Thrice-happy race! that, innocent of blood,
From milk innoxious ſeek their ſimple food. POPE.

walks of life, are apt to take their eſtimate of mankind from the ſmall part of it that lies before them, and conſider the reſt of the world as practiſing in different and under-parts, the ſame treachery and diſſimulation which marks out the characters of their ſuperiors. It is difficult indeed to preſerve the mind from falling into a general contempt of our race, whilſt one is converſant with the worſt part of it. I labour, however, as much as poſſible to guard againſt that ungenerous diſpoſition; as nothing is ſo apt to kill thoſe ſeeds of benevolence which every man ſhould endeavour to cultivate in his breaſt.

Ill, ſurely therefore, have thoſe wits employed their talents, who have made our ſpecies the object of their ſatyr, and affected to ſubdue the vanity by derogating from the virtues of the human heart. But it will be found, I believe, upon an impartial examination, that there is more folly than malice in our natures, and that mankind oftner act wrong through ignorance than deſign. Perhaps the true meaſure of human merit, is neither to be taken from the hiſtories of former times nor from what paſſes in the more ſtriking ſcenes of the preſent generation. The greateſt virtues have, probably, been ever the moſt obſcure; and I am perſuaded in all ages of the world more genuine heroiſm has been overlooked and unknown, than either recorded or obſerved. That *aliquid divinum*, as Tully calls it, that celeſtial ſpark which every man, who coolly contemplates his own mind, may diſcover within him, operates where we leaſt look for it, and often raiſes the nobleſt productions of virtue in the ſhade and obſcurity of life.

But it is time to quit ſpeculation for action, and return to the common affairs of the world. I ſhall certainly do ſo with more advantage, by keeping Palamedes ſtill in my view; as I ſhall enter into the intereſts of mankind with more alacrity, by thus conſidering the virtues of his honeſt heart as leſs ſingular than I am ſometimes inclined to ſuppoſe. Adieu. I am, &c.

FINIS.